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MORTON H. SMITH ELECTED MODERATOR OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Tampa, Florida (June 20, 2000)—At the opening session of the 28th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), the Rev. Dr. Morton H. Smith was elected as Moderator. He was elected over the Rev. Dr. Joseph “Skip” Ryan, 502-391.

The 76 year old veteran churchman, who was the denomination’s first stated clerk, accepted the post with sobering words for the commissioners. As he assumed the podium and the gavel, Dr. Smith declared: “We are a church in trouble.” He stated that, as far as he was aware, he was the first “TR”—that is, “truly Reformed”—in the history of the denomination to be elected Moderator.

The Moderator went on to say that the PCA was in more serious jeopardy, because of the possibility of ecclesiastical division. Dr. Smith emphatically stated: “I do not want to preside over an Assembly that splits.” He mentioned that one presbytery is “going to consider at its summer meeting its relationship with the Assembly”; and added that a few individuals will consider their continued relationship with the PCA depending on what decisions are made at this Assembly.

He referred to the Apostle Paul’s instructions to Timothy regarding qualifications for elders and deacons. “He was



Morton H. Smith at the podium

Presbytery for the tenor of the communion service, and thanks to the Rev. Joseph Novenson, who brought the sermon. The Moderator encouraged the commissioners to re-read the Scripture text before the reconvening of the Assembly in the morning.

The resident of Brevard, North Carolina, also stated that for three months in his family worship, he had been praying for revival in the church. He expressed the desire that all of the many issues which would be confronted by the court would be decided by an appeal to the Bible. Dr. Smith’s candid comments were received warmly and with applause from the commissioners, along with numerous audible “Amens!”

Nominating Morton Smith was the Rev. Dr. Joseph Pipa, President of Greenville (S. C.) Presbyterian Theological Seminary, where the new Moderator is one of the founding faculty members and the Dean of Faculty. In making his nomination, President Pipa stated that Morton Smith, in his service as Stated Clerk, “bent over backwards to be fair.” He urged that Dr. Smith would preside over the sessions with his “characteristic humility.”

Referring to the first man nominated this evening, Dr. Pipa said that “Skip Ryan surely

deserves to be Moderator.” However, “of our *first* generation, there’s only one man whom we’ve not honored as Moderator. . . . It’s time to give this man an honor that he would never seek.”

With a bit of irony, Dr. Smith, after his election, stated that although it was an honor to be Moderator, “it’s [really] a hard unpaid job. The Moderator works harder than just about anybody.”

One of his early duties was the selection of Assistant Parliamentarians. Dr. Smith stated that he was looking to others than those who have in the past been perennially selected, since both of those men are on the Standing Judicial Commission. He was desirous of selecting men who were not involved intimately in judicial matters, or members of the Committee on Constitutional Business, or involved in the matter of dividing Westminster Presbytery, since those were all potentially controversial matters. The new Moderator announced his choice of Sam Duncan, Esq., a ruling elder from Hattiesburg, Mississippi, who was Moderator of the 25th Assembly; and the Rev. David Coffin from Fairfax, Virginia. Mr. Coffin declined by stating, much to the bemusement of the court, “I appreciate the honor, but I’m a player rather than a referee.” The selection of a second



Retiring moderator Tom Leopard (left) congratulates Morton Smith on his election.

writing about behavior in the church visible. We need to hold the behavior of the church visible in a much higher regard than we do.”

Dr. Smith expressed thanks to Southwest Florida



The new moderator is escorted to the podium by Joseph Pipa.

parliamentarian was accordingly postponed until the morning. [The Reverend Frank Moser, Philadelphia Presbytery Stated Clerk, was appointed as the other parliamentarian.—Ed.]

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Commissioners use their yellow cards to vote.

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PCA Attracts Media Attention

More so than in recent years, the General Assembly meeting of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) attracted a significant amount of media attention. Much of it focused on the controversial practice of women preaching in a prominent PCA pulpit.

The media's interest comes with the background of the Southern Baptist Convention having re-affirmed the week prior to the PCA Assembly that women should not be pastors. The big question for the secular media was whether the largest evangelical Presbyterian denomination in the country

apologist and historian stated that his Session has become convinced "that the denomination is unreformable. There seems to be no concern to interact on the biblical issues by those who oppose the more traditional, reformed positions. We have been working to bring about reform for 23 years and things have only gotten worse." Presenting a contrasting view in the same issue was the Rev. Kennedy Smartt, Moderator of the 26th General Assembly in 1998. In response to the question, "Do you see a split coming?", Dr. Smartt said: "We may well lose congregations pastored by men with theonomic views. Maybe 25 to 30 churches. You have to believe exactly as they do or you are wrong."

The May 8, 2000, issue of *Christian Renewal* continued the same theme by means of Dr. Elliott's interview with the Rev. Frank Barker, the founder and until recently the Senior Pastor of Briarwood Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Alabama. Dr. Barker admitted that when he and others formed the PCA, "we were so opposed to liberalism, that we did not see the differences among ourselves. Yes. The tensions have grown. I agree that a minority wants the denomination to be narrowly Reformed. They—the Reformed faction—look for issues to push their view of strict subscription." "How will these tensions be resolved?", Dr. Elliott queried. "I don't know. Maybe they won't be resolved," Dr. Barker responded. "Does that mean a split is inevitable?" "That may be. But I don't know if it is inevitable."

John Van Dyk, Editor of *Christian Renewal*, was at the press table for most of this year's Assembly.

Michelle Bearden, Religion Reporter for the *Tampa Tribune*, wrote an article for the local daily which focused on the conservative nature of the denomination and its commitment to Biblical inerrancy, as well as the women preaching issue. She also covered the Assembly on behalf of NBC Newschannel, and fed a story to about 200 NBC affiliates nationwide.

"Many Women 'Answer Calling,'" an article in the *Chattanooga (Tenn.) Times-Free Press* on the question of women in ministry, touched upon the action by the Southern Baptists, and also had a PCA component. Written by Clint Cooper, the story quoted a former General Assembly Moderator with regard to the Cedar Springs situation. "My understanding of the Bible is that pastoral

work is reserved for men, that apostolic succession is for men," said Frank Brock, president of Covenant College. "Jesus chose 12 men. It goes back to creation order."



Sunrise over the Tampa Bay area

work is reserved for men, that apostolic succession is for men," said Frank Brock, president of Covenant College. "Jesus chose 12 men. It goes back to creation order."

"Yet, Mr. Brock said a woman speaking before a PCA congregation should not be a central issue. It became one last year, though, when it was learned that women had filled the pulpit at Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church

in Knoxville. Since then, charges have been made and dismissed and made again over the matter. They are likely to be debated at this week's General Assembly.



The Tampa Convention Center housed the Assembly.

"I don't know what the General Assembly is going to do, and it remains to be seen what PCA is going to do," he said. "My argument is that it is not for the denomination to say. It's for the local church to say."

Salem Radio Network, with 780 stations in every state and Puerto Rico, highlighted the women's controversy during the week of General Assembly. Another network which is carried by mostly Christian stations, USA Radio News, also featured the creation controversy.

Pat Leisner of the Associated Press's Tampa bureau attended several sessions of the Assembly, and an AP photographer took numerous pictures. The AP story, which concentrated on the John Wood matter as well as creation, was picked up by newspapers in Tennessee.

The day after General Assembly adjourned, the *Knoxville News-Sentinel* had a front-page story, based largely on the AP release, headlined, "Knoxville pastor under investigation." The *Oak Ridger*, the *Nashville Tennessean*, and the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* also printed articles dealing with the women preaching controversy.

On July 1st, the *News Sentinel* ran a piece from a guest columnist, the Rev. Martha Anne Fairchild, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Huntsville, Tennessee. Reacting to the John Wood story, the Presbyterian Church (USA) clergyperson wrote: "These Presbyterians [PC(USA)] understand that God's call to preach may come to women or men, and they welcome the ones called without reference to gender."

Two days later, the Knoxville paper featured a story written by Jeannine Hunter, a staff reporter. She had attended Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church, where Mr. Wood is Senior Pastor, on July 2nd. She reported: "Wood, after reading 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 on Sunday, noted that different interpretations of Scripture have defined denominational differences. In studying the significance of God's lessons within the Bible, he said, one

must ask three questions: What does it say, what does it mean and what is God telling us to do?"

"We must understand, first of all, that every book of the Bible was written in a unique cultural setting at a specific time, a specific place in the language and thought form of that time and place, and it was written to address specific issues in that culture," Wood said.

"Sunday's Scriptural lesson citing the Apostle Paul's writings on church roles was part of a larger review given throughout the summer, but its timing was not lost on members."

Referred to in the article are Dr. Roy Taylor, Stated Clerk of the PCA, and Dr. Dominic Aquila, Editor of the denominational PCANEWS.COM. Miss Hunter wrote: "if only the theologically trained can 'preach,' is it considered preaching if an unordained man or woman stands before a church body and speaks?" Dr. Taylor was quoted as saying that "the crux of the issue" is "what is a definition of preaching?" He added: "Historically, in the church preaching has been defined as the exposition and the application of the word of God by a minister called of God and ordained by the church."

Dr. Aquila, who also is an officer of the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) which ruled the John Wood matter "out of order," commented that some believe that the action taken by Tennessee Valley Presbytery in the Wood matter "was not the kind of action that needs to be done." The article says: "Plus, our internal position of women and preaching, at times volatile and sensitive, is part of the reason that this was driven also," Aquila said.

The article concluded with more quotes by Dr. Aquila. "The argument of Cedar Springs' board of elders was that she wasn't preaching," Aquila said. "She was sharing her philosophy of ministry with the congregation



The Marriott Hotel under stormy skies

would resolve that women should not preach.

The first story in the secular media about the women preaching controversy in the PCA appeared on the front page of the *Greenville (S. C.) News* in February. The banner article, written by Cara Bonnett, was headlined, "Presbyterians clash over whether women should preach." Sparking the intra-church debate was the appearance of a woman staffer at Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church, Knoxville, Tennessee, to fill the pulpit on two Sunday evenings in August 1998, and the subsequent defense of the practice by the Rev. John Wood, Senior Pastor of the congregation.

Miss Bonnett quoted Jim Lockett, Clerk of Session at Cedar Springs Church, as saying: "Some denominations look at what's going on in our denomination and chuckle. . . . We are not trying to make other churches see and interpret scripture like we do. We're trying to do what the Lord's leading us to do, where we can be most effective in reaching our community."

Christian Renewal, a magazine with roots in the

Dutch Reformed community, also publicized the women's controversy within the PCA. More recently, the Canadian-based publication has focused on what appears to be a theological divide. In the April 24, 2000, issue, PCA ruling elder John P. Elliott interviewed the Rev. Steve Wilkins, pastor of Auburn Avenue Presbyterian Church, Monroe, Louisiana. The well-known Southern



A yacht glides by the convention center terrace.

that guides her in the area of ministry she has been hired to do. It was more a presentation of her philosophy, not preaching. But because it was done in the context of a worship service, some have interpreted it as inappropriate.

"Also, the question was what part did the pastor, Rev. John Wood, play? What is being considered is if Wood violated the principle of women not preaching. Does he believe that, espouse it and promote it? That is what's going to be adjudicated."

Assembly Decisively Reverses SJC on John Wood Matter

Assembly Refers Presbytery Petitions to B&O

Tampa, Florida (June 22, 2000)—In a surprise move, the 28th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) adopted the majority report of its Bills & Overtures (B&O) Committee, to refer petitions from four presbyteries to the B&O Committee for recommendation. The four overtures—from Western Carolina, Calvary, Ascension, and James River—were all petitioning for original jurisdiction to be exercised over the Rev. John Wood in the matter of women preaching.

The B&O Committee recommendation came in response to an overture from yet another presbytery, Louisiana, that the 28th General Assembly condemn the opinion of the 27th General Assembly in re the John Wood matter. The Standing Judicial Commission (SJC), acting on behalf of last year's Assembly, had ruled that the requests for the assumption of original jurisdiction were "out of order."

Presenting the B&O motion was Mr. Dan Carrell, a ruling elder from Richmond, Virginia. He began his argument by saying that the "SJC lacked what we lawyers call 'subject matter jurisdiction.'" Mr. Carrell explained that there are only three avenues to the SJC: complaints, appeals, or references. This is a matter which does not fall under one of those categories. However, the "key to the procedural puzzle," according to the barrister, is, What is to be done with an overture? According to the Rules for Assembly Operations (RAO), the petitions constituted overtures (at least two were specifically called such), which should be referred to the appropriate committee of commissioners. But "not one of them has yet to find its way to the

appropriate committee of commissioners." Another attorney, Jack Williamson, immediately challenged the B&O majority position by setting forth a petition for a Constitutional inquiry. Opposing Mr. Williamson's motion to refer these questions to the Committee on Constitutional Business (CCB) was the Rev. David Coffin. In his remarks, Mr. Coffin urged that interpreting the word "act" as the SJC had done in the John Wood matter would "evacuate" of all meaning the Constitutional provision which allows for petitions for original jurisdiction.



Dan Carrell presents the report of the B&O Committee.

The Constitutional inquiry was referred to the CCB, which reported late this afternoon. The CCB opined that the B&O recommendation was in violation of the *Book of Church Order*, including the provision that all judicial cases shall be given by the General Assembly to the SJC.

After evening worship, the Rev. Charles McGowan spoke on behalf of a minority report that would have answered the Louisiana

overture in the negative. He pleaded for the necessity for the church to follow the Constitution, as he made reference to the CCB opinion.

Mr. Carrell responded by saying that "our Constitution embraces procedure, and the issue before us is one of procedure, and whether we are going to follow the procedure that has been set forth. . . . It's a matter of jurisdiction." He noted that a substantial majority of his Committee was supportive of the recommendation, and that the approval, by a vote of 23-8, came after intense and lengthy debate. He, too, asked that the Assembly "sustain our rule of law."

After approving the B&O recommendation, the Committee was dismissed from the meeting in order to deal with the referral.

General Assembly Directs SJC to Adjudicate the Wood Case

Tampa, Florida (June 23, 2000)—The 28th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) voted this morning to accept the finding of its Bills & Overtures (B&O) Committee and commit the petitions for original jurisdiction over the Rev. John Wood to the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) for adjudication. The vote to approve this action

the case would be ruled administratively out of order. Dr. Childs argued for his amendment by claiming he is afraid that the invoking of original jurisdiction is "going to invite the 'big brother' dynamic," as he warned, "You're going to have many more cases."

The Rev. Don Clements supported the amendment, while at the same time saying, "But, gentlemen, do not be fearful to follow [BCO] 34-1."

Countering the amendment was the Rev. David Coffin. The Fairfax, Va., pastor said that it was "not just any action of a presbytery" that would be brought to the purview of the General Assembly by means of invoking original jurisdiction over a minister, and that the fact that two presbyteries would have to



Lea Clowers of First Presbyterian Chattanooga asked for prayer for Tennessee Valley Presbytery after the votes were taken.

concur was sufficient safeguard. He reminded the court that "the Assembly at this time was not sympathetic to the SJC's view."

An officer of the SJC, the Rev. Robert Ferguson, surprised many observers by rising to state, simply: "I actually stand in support of David Coffin."

Chaplain Thomas Eddy, a member of the B&O Committee, argued for his committee's recommendation. He reasoned, "If we don't agree with B&O, then the good name of John Wood will not be restored."

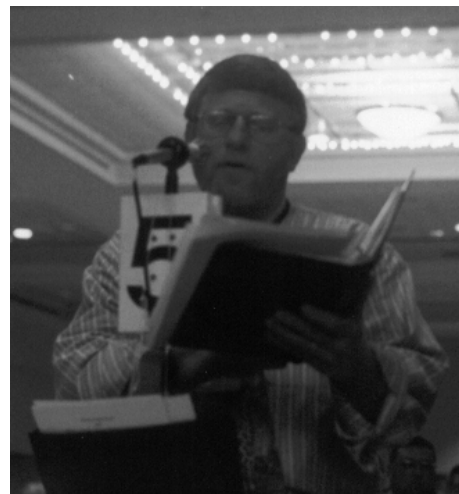
B&O Chairman Dan Carrell summarized his committee's position this way: "It is our judgment . . . that our preliminary hearing should center not on Tennessee Valley's action, but on the substance, that is, what John Wood has or has not done." The Assembly, overwhelmingly, agreed, as it voted down the amendment and approved the B&O recommendation.

Mr. John White, SJC Chairman, shortly thereafter indicated that the Commission would indeed be taking up the matter.

What's Next?

The Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) is authorized to cancel its October meeting, unless business warrants that the Commission gather. Given the press of business, the SJC has indeed scheduled a meeting this fall. At that time, the SJC presumably will deal with the John Wood matter.

Nineteen of the twenty-four members of the SJC served on the previous year's Commission, and thus rendered a judgment already on the matter. Of the five who have just become members, one of them, the Rev. William Harell, is from James River Presbytery, one of the presbyteries which petitioned the Assembly for original jurisdiction over John Wood. In March 2000, the SJC disqualified from ruling on the Wood matter the men from the three presbyteries whose petitions for original jurisdiction were then before the Commission.



Craig Childs offers a substitute motion.

was overwhelmingly in favor. This action came after the dramatic adoption last evening of the B&O recommendation that the Assembly should find the overtures from four presbyteries—Ascension, Calvary, James River, and Western Carolina—as having been timely-filed. When the court last night adopted the Committee's motion, it essentially rejected the action by the SJC in ruling the matter with respect to Mr. Wood out of order; as well as the advice of the Committee on Constitutional Business (CCB).

The motion that was brought this morning followed a late-night meeting of the B&O Committee. That body recommended that the SJC proceed according to *Book of Church Order (BCO)* 31-2. That paragraph prescribes an investigation to determine if there is "a strong presumption of the guilt" of the accused; if there is a strong presumption of guilt, then the court must proceed to trial.

Even this proposal was not adopted without a fight. The Rev. Craig Childs, a member of the CCB and of the B&O Committee, moved that the General Assembly refer the overtures to the SJC to assemble the record of the case and determine if Tennessee Valley Presbytery (TVP) had acted; if the SJC determined that TVP had indeed acted, then

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Assembly Approves New Women's Policy

Tampa, Florida (June 21, 2000)—The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) today approved a new policy with regard to women



Ruling Elder Andrew Webb

speaking. While affirming that women should not preach in public worship under the auspices of the Mission to North America (MNA) Committee, the court also stated that there is a difference between "the preaching of the Word in worship and the subject matter of seminars," and that at the heart of that difference is "the issue of authority." The Assembly interpreted the I Timothy 2 prohibition on women teaching or having authority over men as applying to formal worship and "not that of the more informal seminar which is generally more subjective,

informal and based on personal experience than is the preaching of the Word in worship." The new policy says that in most cases, "teaching and ruling elders present the content in the seminar context. However, from time to time, GA/MNA may ask that godly men and women give presentations even though they are not elders, but who in God's providence may have insights and experience which may prove helpful and instructive to those who lead in ministry."

The new policy supercedes that enacted by the 1997 General Assembly, which stated that women were not to conduct seminars except where the intended audience was other women. Today, the Rev. Roland Barnes, a member of the MNA Committee, moved a substitute motion which would have mandated that the MNA Committee "will not employ women as keynote speakers or expositors of the Bible in seminars except when those seminars have women as the primary audience (I Timothy 2:11-12; Titus 2:2-3/BCO 12)." Mr. Barnes' proposal also would have allowed MNA from time to time to "invite godly women, who in God's providence may have insights and experience which may prove helpful to those who lead in ministry, to give informational presentations to audiences comprised of men or women, in a seminar or similar context."

Objecting to the substitute was the Rev. Bruce Howes. The Delaware pastor suggested that it was "going beyond Scripture" in its strictures.

The Rev. Steve Irby cited the account in Acts 18 of Priscilla and Aquila instructing Apollos. "The public ministry

of the Word is clearly prohibited to women." However, seminars are "by invitation only."

Dr. Frank Barker, pastor emeritus of Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, alleged that some of the stricter views being promulgated today in the PCA are "extreme." That comment brought to a microphone a first-time commissioner, Ruling Elder Andrew Webb of Philadelphia Presbytery. A student at Westminster Theological Seminary, and Moderator of the Warfield List (an internet discussion group), Mr. Webb said, "I wasn't going to speak, but my view has just been called extreme." He rhetorically asked, "Have we really come



Roland Barnes moves his substitute motion.

that far?"

The Rev. James Richter of Biloxi, Mississippi, also spoke in favor of the substitute. He said that the Scriptural prohibition is on women teaching, not

preaching.

Dr. Charles Dunahoo, Coordinator of the denominational Christian Education and Publications (CE/P) Committee, weighed in against the substitute motion. Adopting it would be "almost like trying to change horses in mid-stream," in that CE/P has for years employed two women teacher trainers, often teaching men, at various seminars. The veteran churchman argued, "Let's not do exegesis on the floor of the Assembly."

But Dr. Joseph Pipa, President of Greenville (S. C.) Presbyterian Theological Seminary, countered: "Let's do exegesis, rather than [using] anecdotal evidence in terms of what has been done. . . . There's a two-fold [Scriptural] prohibition on [women keeping] silence and not teaching." This is in contrast to the notion now in vogue, that a woman may do whatever a man may do. The former CE/P employee acknowledged that the church may have been less diligent in its practice, but that was no reason to refrain from taking the correct stance now. "Let's camp in a safe place."

The Rev. Skip Ryan agreed with Dr. Pipa that the "discussion should center around proper exegesis of God's Word." However, in his view, the context of I Timothy 2 was that of the "worshipping church." Mr. Ryan appealed to a book written by the man who nominated him for Moderator, Dr. Edmund P. Clowney, in which he argues that women may teach in a variety of informal teaching settings, including those at which men are present.

The Rev. Steve Meyerhoff, Chairman of the MNA Committee of Commissioners, closed the debate by asking the Assembly to agree with the majority on his committee. The Assembly acquiesced.

GA Approves Amendment Which Would Explicitly Prohibit Women Preaching

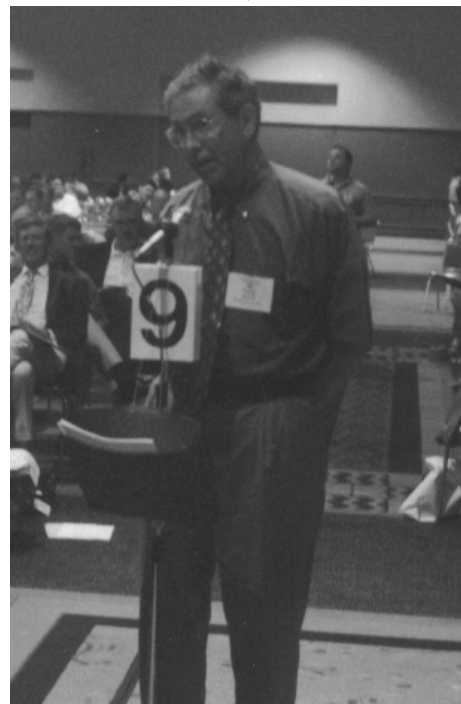
Tampa, Florida (June 23, 2000)—The 28th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) this morning voted to adopt an amendmesnt to the *Book of Church Order (BCO)* which would explicitly prohibit women preaching. The final vote in favor was approved overwhelmingly, with only a scattering of "no" votes.

The amendment was one of two which presbyteries had sent up to the General Assembly, as a result of the recent controversy over women preaching in the PCA. The proposal which was adopted came from Potomac Presbytery; it seeks to amend BCO chapter 12, dealing with the duties and authority of local sessions.

The language which is to be added would state that sessions are "to encourage the women of the church to hold meetings and give instruction appropriate to their calling (e.g. Titus 2:3-5), while prohibiting women from expounding and preaching the Word of God as an ordinance of public worship (cf. BCO 4-4; 53-2), as this is clearly forbidden in Scripture (I Tim. 2:11-12)."

Not adopted was an overture from Mississippi Valley Presbytery, which would have amended the Directory for Worship portion of the BCO. Given the ambiguous status of the Directory for Worship in the PCA, the Bills & Overtures (B&O) Committee adjudged the Potomac route to be superior to that of Mississippi Valley.

The B&O recommendation did not pass without an attempt to amend the language. The Rev. Fred Mau, a member of the



Dr. Frank Brock

Committee, moved from the floor that the words "expounding and" be deleted, and

that the words "in a sermon" be added after "preaching the Word of God."

The Rev. David Coffin from Potomac Presbytery and a member of the B&O Committee explained that the use of the terminology "expounding and preaching" was deliberate, in that it paralleled the language of BCO 4-4. Constitutionally, the terms "expounding and preaching" are intended "to refer both materially and formally" to the act of proclaiming the Word.

That explanation led the Rev. Harry Long to argue for the amendment to the motion: "We've got experts here [in the Assembly], and we had to have David Coffin explain to us the language." Also speaking in favor of changing the proposed amendment was Dr. Frank Brock, who said that the discussion "is beginning to sound like the debate in Tennessee Valley Presbytery." Warning that this was a "potentially divisive issue," the Covenant College President then tried to move that the motion be referred to the Committee on Constitutional Business. The Moderator, however, ruled that since the gentleman had already spoken to the matter, he could not make a motion.

Others argued against the Mau amendment. Dwight Dolby of Southwest Florida Presbytery contended that "one of the possibilities is that of a women reading and expounding Scripture, which would not

be protected against" if the language was modified.

The Rev. Zach Eswine from Great Lakes Presbytery stated that Mr. Mau's motion "implies that preaching can take place outside of a sermon." Ruling Elder Andrew Webb from Philadelphia Presbytery noted that "we're talking about women in worship," as he countered the notion that any exposition of Scripture would be prohibited to women; he added that the Potomac proposal was entirely consonant with the action already taken by the Assembly with regard to the Mission to North America Committee, in which women speaking during public worship was forbidden. And the Rev. Tom Vanden Heuvel, who transferred into the PCA from the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) in 1997, said that "in the CRC, it didn't take long for women not only to expound, but also to preach."

The Mau amendment lost, overwhelmingly. The Assembly then voted for the B&O recommendation.

Having been adopted by the Assembly, the amendment to the BCO now goes to the presbyteries for ratification; if two-thirds of the sixty presbyteries give their consent, the subsequent Assembly must also approve by majority vote before the new language would become part of the Constitution.

Assembly Declares Variety of Creation Views to be Acceptable

Tampa, Florida (June 21, 2000)—The 28th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) this evening adopted a measure which allows for a diversity of interpretation with regard to creation. Upon motion by the Rev. Frank Barker, the court amended a motion to say that “since historically in Reformed theology there has been a diversity of views of the creation days among highly respected theologians, and, since the PCA has from its inception allowed a diversity, that the Assembly affirm that such diversity as covered in this report is acceptable as long as the full historicity of the creation account is accepted.”

The court also voted to reject the view that the Westminster Standards teach that creation was in six calendar days, and that any other view should in the future be viewed as an exception to the Standards. The decisive vote on that substitute motion lost by a margin estimated at closer than 3-2.

The original motion from the Creation Study Committee had been considered as an omnibus, and had three parts: (1) that the entire report “be distributed to all sessions and presbyteries of the PCA and made available for others who wish to study it”; (2) that “the



The members of the Creation Study Committee

this matter, no further action of any kind with respect to this report be taken by the General Assembly for a period of at least two years”; (3) that the committee be dismissed with thanks. Because the motion came as an omnibus, and because no amendment was possible, the Assembly witnessed the motion being under attack from extremes on opposite ends of the spectrum. Dr. Barker wanted to put an end to the matter, by having the Assembly declare its acceptance of the diversity of opinion. On the other hand,

Ruling Elder Daniel Jarstfer argued against the motion because he did not want what he called false and even heretical teachings. The Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary student cautioned lest the church cause little ones to stumble, and urged that the church should not be maintaining a view which in essence says that children have been deceived in their straightforward acceptance of creation



David Hall makes his substitute motion.

in six literal days.

After the defeat of the Committee’s motion, the Rev. David Coffin moved that the first and third recommendations from the Committee be adopted. Shortly thereafter, Frank Barker moved his amendment, thus setting the stage for a substitute motion for

the whole.

That substitute motion was put forth by

the Rev. David Hall, a retiring member of the Standing Judicial Commission. Pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church, Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Mr. Hall has been in the forefront of urging that the authors of the Westminster Standards meant six normal and consecutive days by the employment of the term, “in the space of six days.” He moved the following: “With charity toward all our members and with fidelity to the original authors of our confessional standards, our understanding is that, until evidence to the contrary is found, the Westminster divines intended the confessional phrase ‘in the space of six days’ to specify that the six days of creation were days of normal duration with evening and morning. Accordingly, for the peace of the church, any future candidates who differ with



Jim Jones lodges a protest.

this original meaning should request an exception to this sense of the Confession until documentation that the Westminster divines held other views is firmly established. We also urge courts of original jurisdiction to make these future determinations with care, charity, honesty, and impartiality.”

After the votes, two long lines formed as commissioners recorded their negative votes on the approved measure. Recording his negative vote on Dr. Barker’s amendment was Mr. Coffin.

The action came toward the evening recess, after long parliamentary wranglings in the late afternoon and into the evening. On more than one occasion, even after cloture on a motion, points of information and points of order prolonged the time spent on the matter. At one point, approximately 45 minutes was spent on trying to decide the propriety and effect of a procedural motion from the Creation Study Committee. The Assembly finally decided that the Committee’s recommendation, in effect, suspended some of the provisions of Roberts Rules of Order; the procedure was adopted by a requisite two-thirds super-majority. The approved procedure called for one hour of presentation of the report by the Committee, followed by an hour of open debate, discussion, and questions.



Scores of commissioners line up to file their negative votes. The next day, many men also queued to record positive votes on David Hall’s substitute motion.



Sam Duncan presents the committee report, while Paul Settle moderates.

Assembly declare its sense that in order to permit careful and prayerful contemplation of

On June 22nd, the Rev. Dr. James A. Jones of Lake Charles, Louisiana, presented a protest, signed by more than two dozen commissioners, which stated by adopting the amendment “that the divergent views described [in the report] are all equally valid expressions of the teaching of the Scriptures and the Westminster Standards on the subject of Creation, the General Assembly has bound the consciences of good men.

“Further, the General Assembly has created an intolerable situation for those presbyteries which have already taken a stand on the issue of Creation and which have declared that those divergent views are in fact exceptions to the Standards.

“The Assembly has effected a new standard of judgement contrary to the Bible and our Constitution to which all presbyteries and individuals must now conform.

“The next result of this action is that the Standards have been modified by an unconstitutional method, the plain and clear teaching of the Word of God has been obscured, and the discipline of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ has been eviscerated.”

The Assembly adopted the following response to the protest: “In answer to the protest, the Assembly notes that in its judgement it has established no such standard, but has merely expressed its own opinion in the matter.”

HEARD DURING THE DISCUSSION OF THE CREATION STUDY COMMITTEE REPORT:

“That’ll put us where we are. Who knows where we are?”—Moderator *pro tem* Paul Settle, commenting on the confusing parliamentary procedures adopted by the Assembly.

“Identify yourself.”—Paul Settle. “Jimmy Lyons—you know who I am!” “I wasn’t sure that you’d remember.”

Jimmy Lyons, speaking of the Creation Study Committee and its report: “Winston Churchill said [of a state paper], ‘The very length of this paper will defend it from its ever being read.’ . . . It’s lengthy, and I hope it will be read. . . . And it’s not quite perfect. . . . There’s one sentence in fine print that takes up seven lines of type. There are 94 words in that sentence.” Committee Chairman Sam Duncan: “I can explain that!” Jimmy Lyons: “I don’t want you to explain it!” [laughter] Sam Duncan: “You see, I’m from Mississippi, and Faulkner used to write lengthy sentences.” Jimmy Lyons: “Are you through?” [laughter] “I hold strongly to the six twenty-four hour view, which is the only valid view.” [laughter] “There’s no reason to question one another’s integrity. . . . Maybe that will happen across the church.”

Assembly Accepts College's Answer to Protest

Tampa, Florida (June 22, 2000)—The 28th PCA General Assembly accepted the Covenant College Board's answer to the protest with regard to a college choir singing in a Roman Catholic mass. In the same motion, the Assembly also answered in the negative an overture from Westminster Presbytery which asked that the college's answer be rejected.

In adopting the Board's answer, the Assembly affirmed the distinction made by the Board between singing in a mass and participating in it. The Board argued, and the court agreed, that because the students did not partake of the elements of the Eucharist, they had not participated in the sacrament.

The overture from Westminster Presbytery asked the Assembly to "direct the Board of Covenant College not to permit any musical group from the college to participate in any service where a Roman Catholic mass is held." Among the WHEREAS clauses, Westminster Presbytery declared that "in making response to this protest, the Board has tried to make a distinction between singing in a mass and participating in it"; that "this is a distinction without a difference"; that "no competent church historian or theologian would recognize such a distinction"; and that "the Roman Catholic Church itself does not regard this distinction as valid."

The Presbytery also wrote that "as a Presbyterian denomination, we have a

solemn obligation to maintain our historic doctrine, which is also taught in Holy Scripture (Hebrews 7:27)"; that "the singing in a Roman Catholic mass by a choir which is under the auspices of our denomination has subjected the Presbyterian Church in America to ridicule and suspicion"; that "we have an obligation to protect our church's own good name as well as the good name of Covenant College (I Corinthians 14:40; I Thessalonians 5:23)"; and that "the explanation given by the Covenant College Board does not excuse the participation in this false and superstitious worship (Romans 6:1-2)."

In answering the concern raised by last year's protest, the college board averred: "To the extent that the engagement was more in the nature of an opportunity to witness and a concert than of a worship service, the board of Covenant College endorses the decision of the Madrigals' director to accept the singing assignment, and would encourage judicious exploitation of all such opportunities in the future." It added: "The fact that a Roman Catholic Eucharist was celebrated while the Madrigal group sang could complicate the whole issue if the choir participated in the Eucharist but under the direction of the choir director, the Chamber Choir intentionally did not partake of the Eucharist. The board and administration of the college believe it is wrong for any

group representing the college knowingly to participate in worship practices which our Confession of Faith precludes; we are further agreed that the Roman Catholic celebration of the Eucharist clearly falls into this category. The board and administration have counseled the college family to take care that such cautions are observed in the future."

During discussion of the motion, Dr. Frank Brock, college president, was questioned as to the limits which the institution might put upon participation in the worship of churches whose profession is not compatible with the Reformed faith. He responded by stating that one of the crucial goals of the college is to preach the gospel, and that therefore the college would take advantage of any opportunity to do so. Noting that Roman Catholics in different countries believe different things, he alleged that one must judge Catholicism on a country-by-country basis. He explained that on Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, where he grew up, a person might find more faith in the Catholic Church than in the local Episcopal Church.

The Rev. Dr. Marc Clauson, Pastor of Hope Presbyterian Church, Frankfort, Kentucky, moved an amendment, which would have specified that this participation was inappropriate and should not be engaged in again [see sidebar]. That amendment failed.

The Amendment That Failed

1. That we extend a sincere thanks to the Board and Administration of Covenant College for their thorough examination of this matter and their forthright report.
 2. That we sincerely commend CC for its continuing zeal for the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 3. That we remind CC of the subtle, but powerful danger involved in forgetting the Biblical injunction in 1 Corinthians to avoid unequal yoking with any person or religious institution not in accord with Biblical doctrines or practices of the faith.
 4. We reiterate and emphasize therefore, that participation in any portion of a Roman Catholic service of worship constitutes, based on the inextricable unity and connection among the elements of such a service, an inappropriate participation of those individuals and/or institutions involved.
 5. That we exhort CC to exercise wisdom in the future so that zeal for the Gospel goes hand in hand with knowledge and sound doctrine.
 6. That we urge CC to continue to explore alternative Biblical methods of propagating the Gospel without compromising the church.
- Respectfully,
Marc Clauson

Minority on Oversight Committee Refuses to Express Thanks for Covenant Seminary

Tampa, Florida (June 22, 2000)—Usually, a motion at General Assembly to express thanks for the work of a denominational committee or agency is perfunctory. But at this year's Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), a significant minority on the Committee of Commissioners for Covenant Theological Seminary refused to endorse what normally is a matter of course.

The first recommendation from the Committee, "That the General Assembly give thanks to God for the ministry of Covenant Theological Seminary, for its faithfulness to the Scriptures, the Reformed faith, and the Great Commission, for its students and graduates, its faculty and staff, its Trustees, and for those who support the Seminary through their prayers and gifts," did garner the votes of 23 of the 30 committee members. But six voted against the motion, and one abstained, meaning that close to one-fourth declined to support the measure.

No grounds were given by the minority for the unusual opposition, and there was no debate on the motion when it reached the floor of the Assembly. However, among the statement of major issues raised was this sentence: "Questions were raised concerning CTS's theological positions on such matters as the role of women in the church, creation, and the regulative principle of worship."

Other standard recommendations also did not receive unanimous approval from the Committee. The motion that the Assembly "encourage the congregations of the Presbyterian Church in America to support the ministry of Covenant Theological Seminary through their prayers and gifts, and by recommending the Seminary to prospective students," had two abstentions noted; and the motion that the Assembly "encourage the congregations . . . to support the ministry of Covenant Theological Seminary by contributing the Partnership Shares approved by the General Assembly" had a solitary abstention.

Receiving unanimous endorsement from the 30 men on the Committee were recommendations regarding the minutes, the budget, the financial audit, and that "the Assembly pray for the ministry of Covenant Theological Seminary."

The report noted the "exciting new Youth in Ministry Institute (YIMI) now being developed through a 1.2 million dollar Lilly endowment, the need for the seminary's faculty, staff, and Board to reflect a broader racial mix, the decision as of now not to establish multiple campuses . . . , the faculty-student ratio in light of the tremendous 11 year growth in the student body (ratio goal of 1:16 is presently at 1:16.5), the continued desire of CTS to be held accountable to the PCA and its Reformed standards, and the spiritual climate of the faculty and student body."



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GA Declines to Divide Westminster Presbytery

Tampa, Florida (June 22, 2000)—The 28th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) this morning declined to accede to the request of Westminster Presbytery to divide into two presbyteries. The motion to approve the presbytery's overture failed, 381-599.

Debate on the matter was spirited and respectful, and revolved around several issues, including: the nature of the church, the notion of dividing a presbytery largely because of theological reasons, and the authority of the Assembly to act in a way contrary to the express consent of a presbytery with regard to its division.

The overture candidly admitted that there are theological tensions within Westminster Presbytery. Further, a unique provision would have allowed churches from either side of the Virginia-Tennessee border to choose with which presbytery they wished to affiliate. In essence, although there was a geographical component, the proposed division was motivated by doctrinal considerations.

That the matter was highly conflicted can be seen by virtue of the fact that the Mission to North America (MNA) Committee of Commissioners recommended adoption of the overture by a vote of 14-11-1; and that there were two minority reports, each going in a different direction. The first minority report asked the Assembly to appoint a special commission to visit the Presbytery with a view toward reconciliation. The second minority report, which was also concerned for the unity of the church, proposed amending the overture so as to eliminate the provision of allowing churches in the geographical bounds of one presbytery to belong to the other.

Upon challenge from the floor, the second minority report was called out of order, in that it changed the proposal from the Presbytery without its consent. (The *PCA Book of Church Order* specifies that the General Assembly may unite or divide presbyteries only with their consent—a provision written into the PCA Constitution in order to prevent the type of gerrymandering which had been seen in the Southern Presbyterian Church in the 1970s.) The first minority report was also called out of order, in that it was deemed improper to employ the general powers of the Assembly to "visit" a presbytery. However, the Moderator's ruling was overturned.

Leading off the debate was a member of the Presbytery, the Rev. Cortez Cooper, former MNA Coordinator. Dr. Cooper argued that the cause of the gospel could best be served through having the two sides go their separate ways. He urged that this was "not a pragmatic realignment, but a . . . fresh start"; and concluded: "I plead with you, honor our request."

Another minister from Westminster, the Rev. Brent Bradley of Kingsport, Tennessee, opined: "I think it's unconstitutional to divide on theological grounds. On the other hand, it would be a great relief for everyone involved."

The Rev. Dr. Ric Cannada, Chairman of the Committee on Constitutional Business (CCB), noted that in the opinion of the CCB, the proposal from Westminster Presbytery was "not schismatic."

The Assembly eventually voted down the minority report which asked the Assembly to



Westminster's Carel Van Der Merwe and Brent Bradley

"visit" the Presbytery.

At that point, a modified version of the second minority report—one which would have recognized the necessity of the Presbytery giving its consent—was introduced. Presenting that substitute motion was the Rev. Preston Graham of Northeast Presbytery. The Connecticut pastor lamented the "decay of Christian unity" evident in Westminster Presbytery's overture and the effect adopting it would have on "our denomination's testimony to the world." He declared, "Never has our denomination carved up [territory] as a checkerboard"; and he warned, "we will designate land for a theological point of view, which [situation] just awaits an earthquake."

The Rev. Bill Leuzinger of Abingdon, Virginia, a member of Westminster Presbytery, stated: "It is the theological differences which motivated" the overture. He admitted that those differences are "very difficult."

Westminster's Brent Bradley contended that he was opposed to the substitute for two reasons. First, the removal of many of the "Whereas" statements which referred to the real issue—doctrinal differences—raised a Ninth

Commandment issue for him, since it was not geography which was driving the proposed division. "Westminster is one of the smallest presbyteries in the denomination." He noted that "there are no cultural differences"; and that even though those from East Tennessee may speak with a "drawl" while those from Southwest Virginia have more of a "twang," "we don't need interpreters at Westminster Presbytery—we can understand each other." He added that dividing the Presbytery in the manner proposed in the substitute would leave the Virginia churches in a

Closing the debate was Westminster's Stated Clerk, the Rev. Steve Meyerhoff, who was also Chairman of the MNA Committee of Commissioners. He noted that no one from his Presbytery had supported the substitute motion. The substitute failed.

Mr. Meyerhoff then argued strongly in favor of the overture. He recognized the difficulty of the situation; but pleaded that after much talk, the men of Westminster Presbytery had not been able to find a way to live together peaceably. He stated that, although it was far from unanimous, the majority in the Presbytery had voted for division; he added, "Believe me, 27-16-1 in Westminster Presbytery is a landslide."

Opposing the overture was another minister from Westminster Presbytery, Henry Johnson. The pastor from Tazewell, Virginia, appealed to the Word and its instructions in preserving the unity of the church. "Westminster Presbytery has not opened the Word of God and talked about these issues. The men on the other side of the camp are all men who love the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Yes, we desire the Word of God to go forth." However, according to Romans 15, the proclamation of that Word leads believers "with one voice to glorify God. . . . A true Biblical unity is always unity in truth." He urged the court to turn down the overture "so that Westminster Presbytery may sit down and see the face of the living God."

A Montana pastor, Craig Rowe, stated that, if the overture passed, "we're going to have a very hard time [doing] marriage counseling. . . . I fear here that we're crying, 'Peace, peace,' when there really is no peace." In his view, the proposed division "would have the ultimate effect of killing evangelism."

From Eastern Carolina Presbytery, the Rev. David Bowen said that he had not heard a Biblical reason given for why the division should take place. He also suggested that even for pragmatic reasons, approving the overture was not wise; and he gave an illustration that the two presbyteries might be competing as rivals for a budding mission group in the twin border cities of Bristol, Tennessee-Virginia.

Chairman Meyerhoff concluded the debate by stating that if the overture were not approved, "it will be the first time in our history that a presbytery's request would be turned down. . . . Paul and Barnabas divided over John Mark. We may separate now without bitterness and rancor—but we've talked and we've talked and we've talked. . . . We are in deep distress in Westminster Presbytery."

The failure of the motion to adopt the overture technically left the overture unanswered. But the net effect is that there will not be formal division of Westminster Presbytery.

GA Votes Down Overtures Opposing Newspaper

Tampa, Florida (June 23, 2000)—The Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) General Assembly this morning defeated two overtures which opposed *Presbyterian & Reformed News*. The votes in both cases were overwhelmingly in favor of the recommendations from the Bills & Overtures (B&O) Committee.

A minority report regarding the overture from North Florida Presbytery was presented by the Rev. Stephen Estock, a member of Southeast Alabama Presbytery. He argued that the minority presentation would "strike a better balance—to respect both the independent press, and matters raised by North Florida." The minority recommendation would have recognized the importance of an independent press, while at the same time encouraging North Florida Presbytery to pursue judicially the allegations of wrongdoing by the editorial staff.

But the Rev. Gary Engelstad of New Jersey Presbytery said, "I don't think it's appropriate to encourage anyone to go to the courts." He urged that the brethren concerned follow Matthew 18.

Although there was no minority report regarding the overture from Southeast Alabama Presbytery, an attempt was made from the floor to amend the committee recommendation. The Rev. Chris Labs of Susquehanna Valley Presbytery proposed a substitute that would have said that the General Assembly "appeals to ruling and teaching elders in the press to use temperate language which guards the peace and purity of the church and that they protect the reputations of the people they cover."

But the Rev. Mike Ericson of Central Carolina Presbytery argued that "to adopt this would be to imply that intemperate language was

used."

The Rev. Lea Clowers of First Presbyterian Church, Chattanooga, Tennessee, spoke in favor of the amendment. "Gossip, no matter how nicely stated . . . is still gossip."

Ruling Elder Andrew Webb from Philadelphia Presbytery argued against the motion from the floor, and cited four points. The first point was "our history." The PCA was born out of the *Southern Presbyterian Journal*, and its journalism was railed against by the denominational establishment. The second was the "sunshine issue." "We believe in total depravity," the seminary student averred, and therefore there needed to be a check on those exercising power. The third point was the "Biblical witness." Here he cited the Apostle Paul saying, with regard to Chloe, that "it was reported" that something had occurred. This therefore marks

an instance of something that was outside the church courts, with which the Apostle was concerning himself. The final point was the "freedom of the press issue."

Also speaking against the amendment was the Rev. Lewis Ruff of Northern California Presbytery. He stated that "I have gone to the individual in question" when he was concerned about a matter which had been reported in the newspaper. "I don't support the motion, because I don't think that's the way to deal with this matter."

B&O Chairman Dan Carrell summed up the Committee's position by saying that "both overtures have achieved a very valuable purpose, namely, to open the door of communication." The Assembly overwhelmingly defeated the substitute, and adopted the main motion.

Interchurch matters

PCA Expresses Concern to EPC

Tampa, Florida (June 21, 2000)—The 28th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) voted today to communicate its concerns to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church with regard to that denomination's reception of a PCA minister who has been indefinitely suspended. The court also authorized the Stated Clerk to "likewise address other Reformed bodies who apparently disregard our discipline when requested by a PCA presbytery."

The Assembly's attention was drawn to the matter by an overture from Illiana Presbytery. The overture took note of the fact that the EPC's Mid-America Presbytery had voted on October 23, 1999, to receive the Rev. David W. Baer despite his still being suspended from the ministry. The overture also stated that Mr. Baer had been appointed as organizing pastor of Trinity Fellowship Church, composed of people who had left his former PCA congregation, Westminster Church in Godfrey, Illinois. And, the overture said that "the EPC Mid-America Presbytery rejected the Illiana Presbytery's Censure and the SJC Subcommittee's [sic] decision as being in error." Illiana asked the PCA General Assembly "to take this matter into advisement in regard to current or future relations with the EPC and to assign the Interchurch Relations Committee to investigate this action by the EPC and to recommend an appropriate response and/or actions to be taken by PCA churches that have relations with EPC denominational churches in their area."

The Interchurch Relations Committee of Commissioners recommended an affirmative vote on the overture, but amended the document. The Committee acknowledged that "the EPC may have acted within its own constitutional authority when it received" Mr. Baer, but contended that that action "represents a disregard of biblical judicial process." The Assembly voted to request "that the EPC honor the judicial process and ecclesiastical censures of the courts of this church" and directed the Assembly's Stated Clerk to meet with the EPC's Stated Clerk in order to "find a way to respect each other's judicial processes in similar situations."

Relations between the PCA and EPC have always been somewhat tentative, due in large part to the EPC's allowing its lower courts (sessions and presbyteries) to ordain women to ruling and teaching office. In 1989, the PCA Assembly decisively voted down the recommendation of the Interchurch Relations Committee to establish fraternal relations with the EPC. Instead, the Assembly voted that the PCA "continue communications with the EPC by exchanging observers at national meetings, but that the PCA not seek a relationship of 'ecclesiastical fellowship' with the EPC under the current circumstances because of their irrevocable position providing for the ordination of women as ruling and teaching elders."

The Rev. Dr. Ed Davis, EPC Stated Clerk, and other EPC representatives have on several occasions addressed the PCA General Assembly. However, no EPC observer has been recognized at the PCA Assembly since 1996.

[See related story on page 9—Ed.]

PCA to Seek Expulsion of CRC from NAPARC

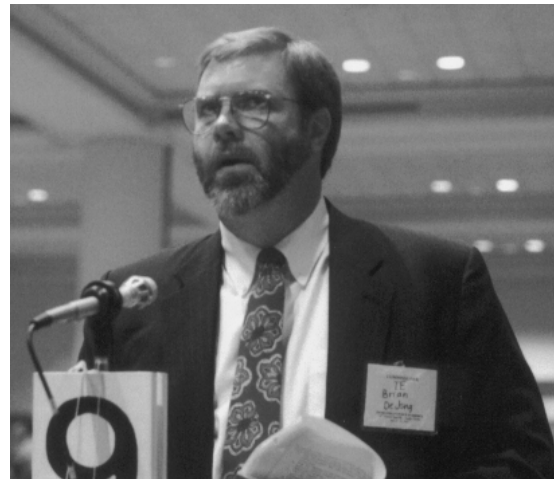
Tampa, Florida (June 21, 2000)—If the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) has its way, the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) will have one less member denomination. Upon motion from the floor, the PCA General Assembly

instructed the Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC) to "move the expulsion of the CRC [Christian Reformed Church] from NAPARC if the CRC does not rescind its position on the ordination of women." The motion was brought by the Rev. Dr. Joseph Pipa, President of Greenville (S. C.) Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

Dr. Pipa had served on the 1995 IRC Committee of Commissioners that had instructed the IRC "to use all due process afforded to them to remove the CRC from membership in NAPARC, if the CRC does not repent of and rescind the action of the 1995 Synod [regarding women being ordained to ruling and teaching office] at the 1996 Synod."

At the annual meeting of NAPARC in November 1996, the PCA delegation moved that the CRC be suspended from membership in the fraternal organization. After receiving overtures from four presbyteries regarding the apparent failure of the PCA delegation to follow the specific directions of the 1995 Assembly, the 1997 Assembly voted to accept the IRC's rationale for its decision first to seek suspension rather than expulsion immediately. The Assembly also directed the Committee that "if the CRC does not reverse the action of Synod '95 regarding women in office within a year of being suspended by NAPARC, at the next meeting of NAPARC the IRC shall introduce a motion that the CRC be expelled from NAPARC."

At its 1997 meeting, NAPARC voted to



The Rev. Brian De Jong of Illiana Presbytery spoke of the fact that other groups have not respected Illiana's disciplinary measures against ministers.

suspend the CRC—a decision that was ratified and effected by the vote of the member churches in 1998. At the 1999 meeting of NAPARC, the PCA delegation did not present a motion to expel the CRC from membership in the group. Presumably, the PCA delegation was waiting for the CRC's Synod 2000, which was to revisit the issue.

As reported at this year's PCA Assembly, the CRC Synod, which had just met, continued to affirm its position that women may be ordained as ministers and elders.

In 1997, the Assembly overwhelmingly voted to break fraternal relations with the CRC. Similarly, the vote on Dr. Pipa's motion was overwhelmingly approved, with only a scattering of "no" votes observed.

NAPARC was formed in 1975, at the instigation of the PCA. The CRC was a charter member, as were the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod (RPCES), and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA). In 1982, the RPCES joined and was received by the PCA. That same year, the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARP) was accepted as a member, along with the Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC). In 1995, the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS) became a member.

Besides serving as a forum for discussion of matters of mutual concern, NAPARC also tries to provide a sense of community among various Reformed denominations. The most concrete

example of that sense of belonging is through a comity agreement and a golden rule agreement. The comity agreement pledges the constituent denominations from muscling their way into areas where there are existing NAPARC churches. The golden rule agreement rerequires the NAPARC members to respect each other's discipline.

PCA Expresses Concern Over NAE's Broadening Ecumenism

Tampa, Florida (June 21, 2000)—The 28th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) registered its "strong disapproval" over a recent by-law change by the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), and instructed its Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC) to seek a rescinding of the change. The NAE voted at its annual meeting this past spring to allow denominations which have membership in the National Council of Churches (NCC) to have dual membership in the NAE.

Formed in 1942, the NAE was designed as a counterweight to the liberal Federal Council of Churches, the predecessor organization of the NCC. The evangelical group wanted to have a national presence which could represent to the media and to government the concerns and perspectives of Christians not in mainline Protestant denominations. But while being distinctly evangelical, the NAE also wished to present a gentler image than the caricature of Fundamentalism. The new approach, which allowed for cooperation with believers in liberal denominations, came to be known as neo-evangelicalism.

The NAE has always allowed congregations and ministers in liberal denominations to belong. The change would allow whole denominations, such as the Reformed Church in America, to hold membership in both the NAE and the NCC.

The PCA has been a member of the NAE since 1986—a decision that was contested by many of the more conservative members of the PCA General Assembly. The denomination has been recognized by the NAE's World Relief Commission (WRC) for its heavy support of WRC relief efforts; and PCA officers have served in important NAE posts.

In another development, this year's General Assembly voted to instruct the Interchurch Relations Committee to investigate what the precise relationship is between the PCA and the World Fellowship of Reformed Churches (WFRC). Through its membership in the NAE, the PCA has also been a part of the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF); and through the WEF, the PCA several years ago set up the WFRC. PCA officers serve as WFRC officers; however, the denominational officials are not delegated by the Assembly or the IRC to attend the WFRC meetings.

PCA Establishes Two Categories of Relations with Other Denominations

Tampa, Florida (June 21, 2000)—The 28th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) today formally decided to establish two categories of relations with other denominations. As adopted by the Assembly,

the two categories will be known as Fraternal Relations and Corresponding Relations.

Fraternal Relations is defined this way: "The General Assembly may maintain a fraternal relationship with other Presbyterian/Reformed denominations that are voting members of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council and with other such Churches with whom the General Assembly wishes to establish fraternal relations unilaterally. This would involve the exchange of fraternal delegates, exchange of General Assembly or General Synod minutes, communications on matters of mutual concern, and other matters that may arise from time to time. With regard to Corresponding Relations, the Assembly said: "The General Assembly may maintain corresponding relation with other evangelical Churches in North America and in other continents for exchanging greetings and letters of encouragement. This may include the exchange of official observers at the broadest assemblies, and communications on issues of common concern."

In the past, there have been three levels of relations with other churches. The 1991 Assembly established those three categories as Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship, Churches in Fraternal Correspondence, and Churches in Ecclesiastical Correspondence. What was not immediately evident to most people at that point was that no General Assembly action was specifically necessary in order for denominations to become Churches in Fraternal Correspondence; instead, their membership in the World Evangelical Fellowship would automatically entitle them to that designation.

The 1998 Assembly voted to instruct the Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC) to update and revise the categories of fraternal relationships. The IRC, which last year asked for a one-year extension on the assignment, brought the recommendation which was adopted.

PCA Answers Bible Presbyterians' Concerns

Last year's General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) met in Louisville, Kentucky, headquarters city for the PCA's liberal counterpart, the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.), or PC(USA). In an attempt to be gracious, an official PCA press release described the relations between the two denominations as being "cordial."

The Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church (BPC), a denomination for which separation from unbelief is a hallmark, met in August 1999 and expressed concern over the allegedly cordial relations which the PCA said it enjoyed with the PC(USA). The communication adopted by the BPC also noted with alarm the participation in a Roman Catholic mass by a choir from the PCA's Covenant College.

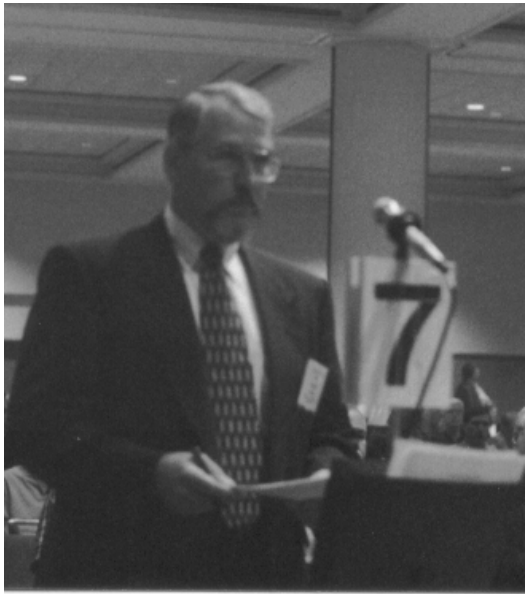
Since the communique concerned the denominational press office, the PCA Stated Clerk directed it to the Administrative Committee (rather than the Interchurch Relations Committee), which then proposed an answer. As amended by the Administrative Committee of Commissioners, and adopted by the Assembly, the response reads: "We appreciate your zeal for the Lord. We regard our separation from our former denomination in 1973 to have been a tragic necessity. The Presbyterian Church in America was formed as a result of 'long years of struggle and heartache on the part of many of us to return the Church to purity of faith and practice' (*Minutes of the First General Assembly*, p. 27, 'An Address to All Churches')." Accompanying the response was to be a copy of the "Address to All Churches," which the First General Assembly had adopted as a rationale for separating from the Southern Presbyterian Church.

Formal Objections Lodged Against SJC Decisions

Tampa, Florida (June 22, 2000)—At the 28th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), commissioners lodged formal objections to two decisions of the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC).

The first had to do with the appeal of David Baer from his being suspended indefinitely from the ministry by Illiana Presbytery. The objection, presented by Ruling Elder Paul English of Concord, North Carolina, noted that the Presbytery had first imposed a censure of definite suspension, and then had, without further judicial process, imposed a censure of indefinite suspension. This critical change in sentence had not been caught by the SJC, which denied the appeal.

The second objection was presented by the Rev. Jeff Black of Fremont, North



Jeff Black

Carolina. Mr. Black was one of two respondents from Eastern Carolina Presbytery, appointed to defend that court's action with regard to the Rev. Byron Curtis. Eastern Carolina had prohibited this Bible professor at Geneva College from teaching his exceptions to the denomination's Constitution as true. Mr. Curtis then "appealed" this decision to the SJC. However, under the PCA's Constitution, an "appeal" is in order only when there has been a trial. If he had "complained" the action, then that complaint would have gone first to the Presbytery; but, he had sent the paperwork directly to the SJC.

Complicating the situation was the fact that Eastern Carolina had "referred" the Curtis matter to the General Assembly. The Presbytery later clarified that its intention in making a "referral" was to direct a Constitutional inquiry to the Committee on Constitutional Business (CCB). Indeed, since there was no judicial matter pending before the court, any referral it made could not

have been a judicial reference.

The CCB at last year's Assembly did answer that Constitutional inquiry. The Committee affirmed that a Presbytery may prohibit a man from teaching his exceptions to the Standards as being true.

Despite the fact that the Presbytery had clarified its intention, and despite the fact that the Presbytery in this circumstance could not have made a judicial reference, the SJC decided to accept the "reference." The Commission thereupon sent the alleged "complaint" back to Eastern Carolina for adjudication, thus keeping the matter alive.

Mr. Black's objection noted errors in the Statement of Facts, violations of the Constitution by the SJC, the SJC ignoring the action of the CCB, the SJC

contradicting the express understanding and intention of Eastern Carolina's reference to the CCB, and apparent untruths in the SJC's reasoning. The minister asserted that there "never was a hearing with the SJC panel nor full commission." He also stated that the contention by the SJC that the alleged reference was "related to judicial complaints already in process" was contradicted by the Presbytery's minutes: "The Curtis complaint was not in process as it was never filed with the presbytery and the Black complaint had been adjudicated two months earlier. These two items, contrary to the SJC's reasoning were not in process."

The SJC reported the disposition of six cases or matters before it. Two of the six were ruled out of order by the SJC because of the lack of timeliness in the filing of the paperwork. Three of the other four matters adjudicated were contested by commissioners: the Baer case, the Curtis case, and the John Wood matter [see story on page 3].

GA Approves BCO Amendment Regarding Use of Counsel in Judicial Matters

Tampa, Florida (June 23, 2000)—The 28th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) today voted to refine the definition of the use of counsel in judicial matters. If approved by two-thirds of the presbyteries and by next year's Assembly, the *Book of Church Order (BCO)* will be amended so as to allow any communicant member in the denomination to represent an accused in a trial.

The action came as the court answered in the affirmative an overture from James River Presbytery, which raised the issue of the meaning of the Constitutional terminology of "professional counsel." Currently, the *BCO* says that "No professional counsel shall be permitted as such to appear and plead in cases of process in any court; but an accused person may, if he desires it, be represented before the Session by any communing member of the same particular church, or before any other court, by any member of that court." James River wanted to clarify that the prohibition on "professional counsel" did not prohibit a defendant's counsel from being reimbursed for expenses incurred.

But once the matter of *BCO* 32-19 was broached, the Bills & Overtures (B&O) Committee undertook to refine the paragraph further. B&O Chairman Dan Carrell, an attorney from James River, explained that "the discussion in the Committee focused on the scope of how broad the counsel should be."

Not everyone in the Assembly agreed with the B&O approach. Ruling Elder Howie Dunahoe, a member of the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC), offered an amendment, which would have restricted the scope. His proposal was that "An accused person may, if he desires, be represented (1) before the Session by any communing member of the church; (2) before the Presbytery by any member of the Presbytery or any member of a church under its jurisdiction; (3) before the

General Assembly by any communing member of the General Assembly." Mr. Dunahoe stated that "the amendment would not allow someone to get a defense counsel from anywhere across the United States."

B&O member Jay Neikirk, who also sits on the Committee on Constitutional Business, argued against Mr. Dunahoe's motion. "I'm not sure I see the harm in having anyone who he [the defendant] wants to represent him."

The Rev. Howard Griffith from James River spoke in favor of the modification from the floor. "I think it's a healthier approach," he said, to have people from the local church involved in a trial.

But the Rev. Bruce Howes countered that the remaining prohibition on professional counsel would remove any "financial incentive" from someone running around the country, representing people. And the Rev. Brent Bradley noted that "should an individual come from a very small church," his ability to find counsel in that congregation might be impaired.

Mr. Dunahoe's motion was handily defeated, and the B&O proposal overwhelmingly approved. The language which was adopted reads: "The accused shall be entitled to be represented before the courts of this church by counsel, who shall have the right to be heard by oral and/or written argument. Any such counsel shall be a communing member of the Presbyterian Church in America. . . . No person shall accept any fee or other remuneration for any service rendered as counsel, but reimbursement may be made to cover any personal expenses incurred or to be incurred by such counsel in the course of representation."



Jay Neikirk

Formal Objection on the Baer Case

I hereby present a formal objection to the judgment in Case 98-9, David Baer vs. Illiana Presbytery. Although we do not have the full record of the case before us, even what we do have is sufficient to demonstrate that the Standing Judicial Commission, as the commission of the General Assembly, did not follow the *Book of Church Order*.

According to *BCO* 15-3, when a presbytery commits a judicial matter to a commission, that commission "shall try the case . . . and shall submit to the Presbytery a full statement of the case and the judgment rendered. The Presbytery without debate shall approve or disapprove of the judgment. . . . If Presbytery approves, the judgment of the commission shall be final and shall be entered on the minutes of Presbytery as the action. If Presbytery disapproves, it shall hear the case as a whole, or appoint a new commission to hear the case again."

From this paragraph of our Constitution, which reflects the historic Presbyterian understanding of commissions, it is clear that a presbytery (apart from the extraordinary employment of referral of a constitutional issue to a study committee) may not accept only part of its commission's report on a judicial matter. Rather, the court, "without debate," votes the report up or down. That includes the censure

meted out by the commission.

The reason for this provision is obvious. The commission has had the opportunity to conduct the judicial proceedings, and thus is in the best position to weigh the testimony, as well as to hear the presentation of evidence and arguments in the orderly manner prescribed by our Constitution. However, to allow the court as a whole to impose its own sentence is not appropriate, when the court as a whole has not heard the case.

And yet, that is precisely what happened in the Baer case. The SJC panel itself admits that the Presbytery's judicial commission convicted Mr. Baer and in August 1998 administered the censure of definite suspension. At the October 1998 stated meeting of Illiana, the Presbytery accepted the findings of its commission, but then proceeded

to suspend Mr. Baer indefinitely.

It would have been one thing to have changed a sentence of definite suspension from two months to, say, six months. That, too, would have been wrong. But changing the sentence from definite suspension to indefinite suspension is particularly wrong, and that for at least two reasons. One is that the sentence is lengthened to an indeterminate duration, from a relatively short time span. The second reason, however, is the most germane, viz., that the change in censure in this instance changed the whole judgment. Indefinite suspension is to be administered only when the person is impenitent; while definite suspension is appropriate only when the person is repentant. When the commission ruled that Mr. Baer should

be suspended for a definite period of time, that commission judged that Mr. Baer had indeed repented. However, when the Presbytery imposed a censure of indefinite suspension, the court overruled that finding of penitence by the commission, and, in essence, determined that the man had not repented.

This sort of injustice is precisely what our rules and procedures are supposed to prevent. An accused has the right to plead with a court as to why he should not be found guilty, or impenitent, and why a certain censure should not be imposed. But according to the SJC's own record of the matter, Mr. Baer was not present at the Presbytery meeting where the court, without having heard from him, proceeded to suspend him indefinitely, thereby branding him as a man who had not yet repented.

I do not wish to impugn the motives of the SJC or of the panel which heard the appeal. However, the erroneous judgment in this case is yet another example where the SJC has adjudicated in such a way as to pervert justice. By means of this formal objection, I hereby declare my repudiation of the judgment in this judicial case, and call upon the General Assembly, as a court, to condemn the opinion of the SJC in this matter.



Paul English presents his formal objection.

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New Office Buildings Approved

The 28th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) voted overwhelmingly to approve the construction of two new buildings for denominational offices. To be located off of Sugarloaf Parkway at I-85, the new one-story buildings are slated to cost at least \$6 million.

One of the buildings is to be occupied and owned by Mission to the World (PCA), Inc., while the other is to be occupied by other denominational committees and agencies (Administrative Committee [AC]; Mission to North America [MNA]; Christian Education and Publications [CE&P]; Insurance, Annuities, and Relief [IAR]; and the PCA Foundation [PCAF]) and owned by Presbyterian Church in America (A

Corporation).

From the proceeds of the sale of the existing building (at 1852 Century Place, Atlanta), \$710,000 is to be returned to Mission to the World (MTW) which money had been previously received from MTW as a provisional gift to be repaid upon the sale of that building. That money had been received from MTW's Japan Mission ten years ago, as a partial proceed from the sale of land in Japan. The provisional gift and the manner in which it was transacted generated much controversy within the denomination a decade ago. (See *Minutes Eighteenth General Assembly*, pp. 90-94, 484-87.) After that \$710,000 is disbursed, MTW would receive 42.04 per cent of the remaining proceeds, with

the remainder going to the denominational corporation.

Both MTW, Inc., and the denominational corporation are authorized to "use their respective equities from the sale of the PCA Office Building to secure office facilities for the Atlanta-based Committees and Agencies."

The PCA committees and agencies which plan to operate in the new facilities are authorized "to initiate jointly a Capital campaign to help fund this project. The capital campaign will include the help of professional consultation. A feasibility study will be made before embarking on the campaign."

The Assembly authorized Presbyterian

Church in America (A Corporation) "to mortgage the new property of the Presbyterian Church in America (A Corporation) (not the property of Mission to the World (PCA), Inc.) for a maximum of \$2,000,000 to finance the property/facility to be used by AC, MNA, CE&P, IAR, and/or PCAF."

When the PCA was formed in 1973, the various committees and agencies were encouraged to maintain offices in separate cities. The Tenth Assembly (1982) mandated the centralized location of denominational offices, and the Eleventh Assembly specified Atlanta as the place. Four years later (1987), the Assembly approved the purchase of the current facility.

Budgets Approved: Coordinators' Salaries Go Up, Again

The 28th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) approved the budgets for the various committees and agencies of the denomination. The budgets total close to \$91 million. This includes expense budgets totaling \$73,707,524 and partnership shares budgets of \$17,103,434.

Also approved were Chief Administration Office (CAO) Compensation and Guideline for 2001. As reported to the Assembly, the increase

for next year is three per cent, which is half a per cent higher than the estimated Consumer Price Index increase.

Each CAO has three levels of possible compensation: high, median, and low. For the Stated Clerk, the CAO for the Administrative Committee, those figures range between \$130,660 and \$96,580. But his is not the highest set of figures. The Coordinator for Mission to the World may earn between \$155,005 and \$114,565.

The Director of the PCA Foundation comes next, with earnings between \$153,985 and \$113,815; followed by the President of Covenant College (\$152,410 to \$112,650) and the President of Covenant Theological Seminary (\$146,775 to \$106,090). Rounding out the numbers are the Coordinator for Mission to North America (\$138,660 to \$102,485), the Director of Insurance, Annuities, and Relief (\$132,775 to \$98,140), the Coordinator for Christian Education and

Publications (\$125,765 to \$92,960), and the Director of Ridge Haven (\$114,510 to \$84,640).

Compensation is considered to be "any income, or form of income, from the employer which the IRS considers taxable and all forms of non-taxable benefits, such as but not limited to, housing allowance, insurance premiums, and retirement plan contributions. Moving expenses are not included in the definition of compensation."

GA Authorizes Strategic Planning Committee

The 28th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) authorized the appointment of a nine-member Strategic Planning Committee for the PCA General Assembly Ministries, "in order to enhance their cooperative service to the denomination as a whole." Dr. Frank Brock,

President of Covenant College, will serve as Chairman, and Dr. L. Roy Taylor, Stated Clerk, as Secretary. The other denominational coordinators, presidents, and directors will constitute the remainder of the membership. The Strategic Planning Committee is to nominate to the Administrative Committee (AC) "a broadly

representative twenty-four-member Steering Committee (with each nominated member to be approved by the AC) to give theological, spiritual and organizational input to the planning function, to review and approve the plans as they develop before the plans are presented to the AC by the Steering Committee. Voting members will be

[Ruling Elders] and [Teaching Elders]; any other steering committee members will serve as advisors. The AC would then receive the plan, review it, and bring the final recommendation to the 30th General Assembly in 2002. The implementation of this motion is contingent upon securing the required funding."

RUM to Become Its Own Permanent Committee

With little fanfare, Reformed University Ministries (RUM), the college campus outreach of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), achieved separation from Mission to North America (MNA). Organizationally, the new status becomes effective immediately. However, elevation to becoming a new permanent committee will have to await approval of amendments to the Book of Church Order by two-thirds of the presbyteries and final approval by a subsequent Assembly.

Dr. Rod Mays, who has been Coordinator for Campus Ministries, will become the first RUM Coordinator. Over the next year, members of the current MNA Subcommittee on Campus Ministries will govern the work of the agency. After that, there will be five classes of three men each (two teaching elders and one ruling elder for one class, followed by one teaching elder and two ruling elders in the next class).

In order to provide continuity, the presbyteries were encouraged to nominate to the Nominating Committee particular individuals named by the RUM Transition Committee. These are men "who have served on affiliated committees, and, especially those who have

served on the General Assembly MNA Campus Subcommittee, have information and expertise to contribute in behalf of the General Assembly for the well-being of campus ministry."

RUM has been one of the denomination's success stories. Many of the college students who have been ministered to by it have become active members of the PCA, and quite a few of the young men have gone into the ministry.

The unusual proviso of encouraging specific individuals to be nominated by their presbyteries for a permanent committee is reflective of a concern to try to keep RUM on the same track theologically. Indeed, there was informal discussion that one way to prevent RUM from being subject to the politics of the General Assembly, was by making it a special committee (similar to other Assembly committees, such as the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records and the Nominating Committee, whose membership is determined by the presbyteries rather than by the Assembly itself). But economic considerations nixed that suggestion, in that it was believed that only permanent committee status would guarantee significant funding.

Gems from Jimmy

Our favorite Choctaw Indian chief is Jimmy Lyons, retired missionary-evangelist who worked for the Presbyterian Church in America's Mission to the World for over two decades. Through the years, Jimmy could always be counted on to give a General Assembly a good belly laugh or two, as well as a lot to think about. Here, we recount the thoughts he shared with the Assembly this year with regard to the salaries being earned by denominational coordinators.

"I thought we're a non-profit organization. It seems like we're becoming more like a corporate

entity. . . . The cowboys out in Oklahoma have a saying: 'If you ride point on a herd, you ought to turn around every once in a while to see if they're still following you.'"

A few minutes later, he spoke about the registration fee for General Assembly (\$200), as well as the opulent locations where the Assembly is now being held every year: "I do hope we get these expenses down. I'm tired of \$10 breakfasts and \$20 lunches. . . . It's getting too expensive to come."

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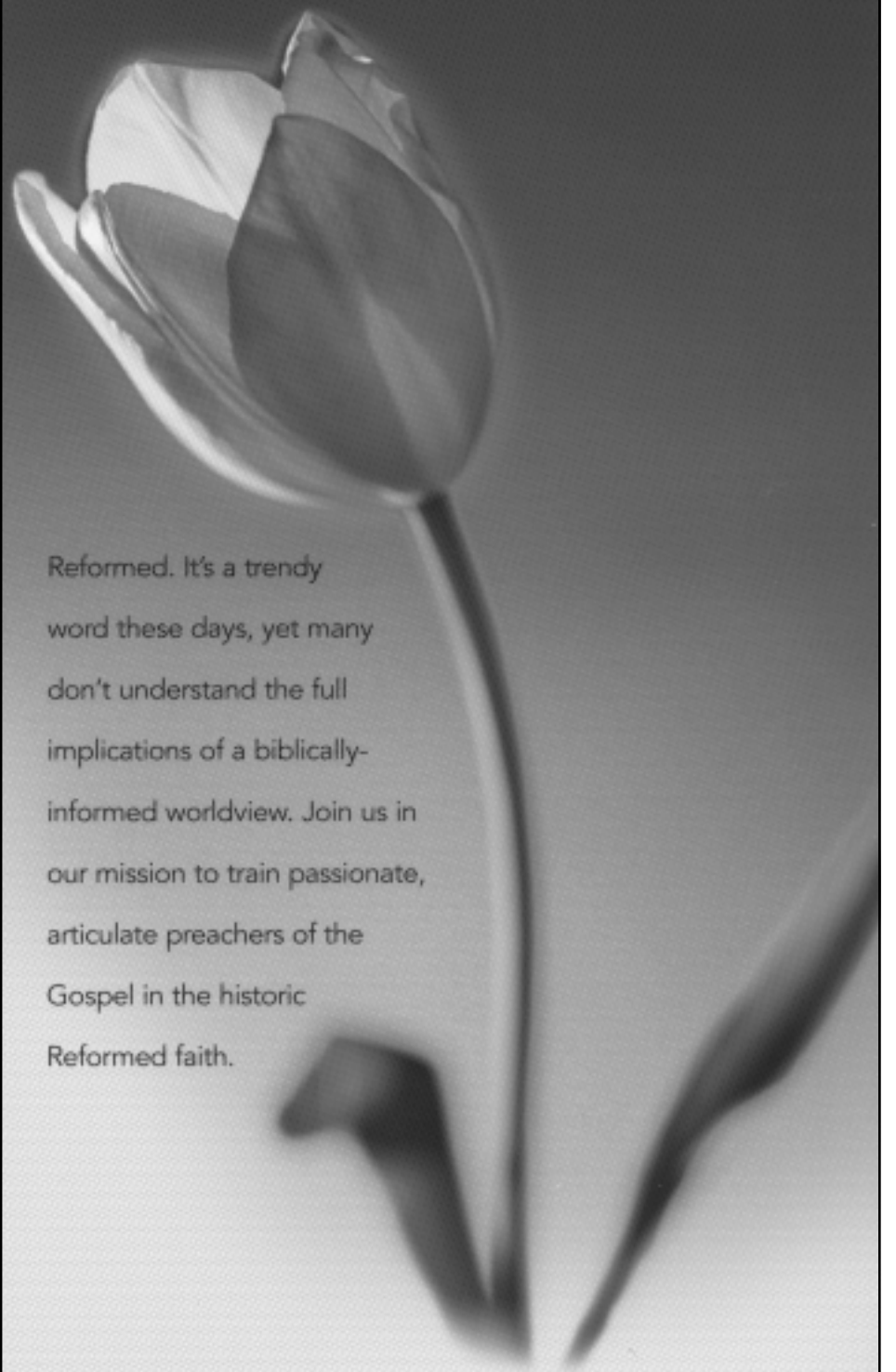
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All Five BCO Amendments Approved

With very little discussion, all five amendments to the *Book of Church Order (BCO)* which were before the 28th Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) General Assembly were approved. These amendments, which had been approved by last year's Assembly, also received the blessing of at least two-thirds of the 58 presbyteries.

BCO 24-1 was amended so as to provide more time to Sessions to examine prospective candidates for ordained office (elders and deacons). This amendment was initially approved by the 1998 Assembly and was carried over for another year, since an insufficient number of presbyteries had given their blessing and several presbyteries had not reported a vote on the matter to the 1999 Assembly.

BCO 13-12 was amended with regard to called meetings of a Presbytery. Previously, at least two ruling elders and two teaching elders, representing at least three churches, had to concur in a call for a special meeting of the court. The amendment raises the requirement to three ruling elders and three teaching elders from three churches. The new proviso also allows a Presbytery to "prescribe in its rules its own requirements for calling a special meeting, provided that those requirements are not less than those stated in this section."

BCO 15-1 was amended to specify that when a Presbytery commission "is appointed to serve as an interim Session, its actions are the actions of a Session, not a presbytery."

BCO 43-5 was clarified that when a complaint is made against a court, it must appoint one or more representatives to defend its actions only if and when that complaint is taken to the next higher court.

And *BCO* 38-1 was amended to make clear that in a case without process, an accused must be intending to make confession of sin before a court may render judgment without process. The new provision also enunciates that in a case without process, the accused has the right of complaint (but not appeal) against the judgment. Previously, the right of the accused to complaint in such a matter was only implicit, but not explicit. Furthermore, prior to this amendment, there was no Constitutional provision for a person whose censure was indefinite suspension, to ask for redress by a higher court should the court of original jurisdiction take further judicial action with regard to him.

Usually, business to a General Assembly comes before the court in one of three ways: either through the report of a committee or agency, through an overture from a presbytery, or through a personal resolution introduced by one or more commissioners to the Assembly. At this year's Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) Assembly, five commissioners introduced six personal resolutions, and struck out on all six.

Ruling Elder Bob Miller of Philadelphia Presbytery put forth two proposals. One of them asked the Assembly to authorize someone to go personally to government officials who failed to respond to the correspondence sent by the Stated Clerk, expressing concern over the matter of abortion. Upon a unanimous recommendation (29-0-0) from the Bills & Overtures (B&O) Committee, the Assembly agreed that "the Assembly's views are adequately expressed and properly communicated in its communication, and it would be impractical to ask the Stated Clerk to seek to speak further on behalf of the Assembly."

Mr. Miller's other resolution asked that the Assembly advise the Presbyterian and Reformed Joint Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel (PRJC) "that its chaplains have denominational license to counsel women against enlisting or remaining active in combatant categories of military armed forces, and pending receipt and acceptance of a report from the Assembly's Ad Interim Committee on Women in Combat the General Assembly reserves judgment on the general propriety of women in combat and appropriate actions." A unanimous B&O Committee (29-0-0) recommended that this resolution be answered in the negative, in that it "would be premature for the Assembly to take action on this issue before the Study Committee on Women in the Military has completed its work."

The Rev. Jerry Mead's resolution was concerned about A Convention of the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which is recommended by a committee of the United Nations to its members. "This convention proposes the legalization of prostitution, as well as the recognition of homosexual practice as normal, marriage of same sex couples, and other pro-abortion legislation." The resolution asked the Assembly to go on record as opposed to this convention, and "that the Stated Clerk be instructed to

Personal Resolutions Go 0 for 6

communicate this opposition to the President of the Senate and the Senate Majority Leader and/or members of the PCA communicate this opposition to their senators." The Assembly answered this resolution in the negative, as the B&O Committee unanimously (29-0-0) stated: "Such treaties and legislation are not properly subjects for the Assembly's consideration (*WCF* 31-5). Further, if it were the Assembly's business, the language of the Convention is not before the Assembly and thus any statement would be made in ignorance. The Assembly has declared its understanding, through its Constitution and various declarations, of the Bible's teaching on the particular moral issues noted in the personal resolution. The Assembly encourages all members of the PCA to continue in their God-given responsibilities as active and discerning citizens."

The Rev. Charles Wilson, who heads Concerned Presbyterians, a group dedicated to the reform of the church, introduced a personal resolution which underscored the "obvious unrest" in the denomination over doctrinal issues. His resolution was similar to an overture which he sent up to General Assembly five years ago, after Palmetto Presbytery declined to adopt it.

The resolution alleged that "this unrest is divisive in character, thus hampering the Church from effectively carrying out the Great Commission." Among the issues which manifested "the diversity of opinion in the PCA" were ones such as Scripture and Hermeneutics, subscription to the Standards by church officers, church polity, worship, Biblical discipline, and mission. Mr. Wilson asked that a study committee be elected or appointed to study the matter; "[p]ropose a method, satisfactory to all parties, as to how the present difference

may be put to rest," with report to be made to the 29th General Assembly. Again, a unanimous B&O recommendation prevailed, to answer the resolution in the negative. Among the grounds offered were that the "scope of the requested issues to be studied is sufficiently vague and broad as to make the study impractical, unreasonable, and unlikely to be fruitful"; that "[s]ystems are in place to allow the Assembly and the Denomination to deal with the issues noted in the resolution (e.g., the Creation Study Committee, the Bills and Overtures process, etc.);" and "[t]he peace and purity of the PCA will be maintained as the Holy Spirit continues to apply the truth of Ephesians 4:2-6 to our hearts."

The Rev. John Owen Butler asked by means of a resolution that the Assembly keep tabs in the denominational statistics on those who are being catechized. The Assembly followed the lead of the Administrative Committee of Commissioners, which recommended (10-4-4) that the resolution be answered in the negative "because it will not effectively encourage the use of the catechism."

The Rev. Jeff Black wanted to know what had happened to the half a million dollars which Mission to the World (MTW) had raised on behalf of Franco Maggionto, a converted Roman Catholic priest who ministers in his native Italy. MTW had indicated that it would not support him, and none of the funds found their way to him. The Assembly answered the resolution in the negative, with the notation that Mr. Black and MTW have talked and "Mr. Black is satisfied with their response. The fund drive has been discontinued, MTW has properly disposed of all funds and the committee of commissioners commends MTW for acting with complete integrity and good prudence in this matter."

CE/P and MNA Plan Joint Conference on Mercy

Two denominational committees of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) will sponsor a "mercy" conference. Scheduled for March 2-3, 2001, in Atlanta, the conference "is a call to PCA churches to live out the requirements of biblical faith and thus to pass on the richness of the Reformed tradition to the next generation. It is designed to: cast a vision for mercy ministry; teach congregations that mercy is a characteristic of a covenant community; equip congregations to minister mercifully to the strangers and aliens, the oppressed and needy; develop an integrated approach to ministry so that mercy permeates the entire church and becomes a way of life."

Entitled "The Call of the Gospel: Sharing Christ . . . Showing Mercy," the conference is jointly sponsored by the Christian Education and Publications Committee and the Mission to North America Committee. Three main speakers will be featured: the Rev. Tim Keller; Mrs. Kay James; and the Rev. Randy Nabors. The targeted audience includes pastors, elders, deacons, ministry staff, WIC representatives, and other key leaders.

According to the *WIC Resource Letter* (Spring Quarter 2000), the 2001 conference is the natural outgrowth of the 1999 WIC Conference, "Daughters of the Covenant, What Does the Lord Require?," which also focused on mercy ministry. The newsletter states: "The true covenant community is compassionate, but compassion is not

gender-specific. When the call to compassion was issued to daughters of the covenant, it was never intended to stop there. The prayer was that women would be equipped to support and help the whole church to be a community of compassion. By God's grace we are now being given an unprecedented opportunity for it to be so." The publication continues: "We stand in the tradition of covenant-keeping forefathers and foremothers who shared Christ and showed mercy. We must pass that legacy on to the rising generation."

"Daughters of the covenant, rejoice with us that God has given us this opportunity to encourage our entire denomination to turn up the volume on this critical issue."

The Presidents of the presbytery WIC organizations (PRESWIC's) are encouraged to contact their Presbytery's Christian Education and Mission to North America chairmen "and plan together how to promote this in [the] presbytery." Pastors' wives are to "[b]e sure your husband knows about this conference and plans to attend." Local WIC presidents are urged to "[t]alk with your pastor, or elder representative, about how you can help plan for this conference. For example, make copies of the flyers and get this information before the church via bulletins, bulletin boards, newsletters, and personal delivery to elders and deacons."



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In Other Action . . .

The 28th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) . . .

*Continued for another year its Ad Interim Committee on Women in the Military.

*Accepted invitations for the 2003 General Assembly (Winston-Salem or Charlotte, North Carolina, area) and the 2004 General Assembly (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, area), both invitations being "subject to suitable facilities being available." The 2001 Assembly will be in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area, and the 2002 Assembly in Birmingham, Alabama.

*Commended the Administrative Committee (AC) and its staff "for successful efforts and stewardship to improve the AC's financial position."

*Turned down an overture from Grace Presbytery which asked that the entire Directory for Worship be given "full constitutional status and weight." Only three chapters (56-58), dealing with baptism, admission of people to communicant membership, and communion, have been granted full constitutional authority; the other chapters fall under a "Temporary Preface," which states that the Directory "does not have the force of law and is not to be considered obligatory in all its parts."

*Turned down overtures out of New Jersey Presbytery which sought to perfect the language of BCO 56;

*Turned down an overture from Philadelphia Presbytery which would add a vow for elders when receiving members.

*Turned down an overture from Ellisville (Miss.) Presbyterian Church, which wanted to increase participation by ruling elders in presbytery, by allowing that in every instance a congregation could be represented by a minimum of two ruling elders. (At present, when there are fifty per cent more ministers than churches on the roll of a presbytery, each church may be represented by a minimum of two ruling elders. Only a handful of

presbyteries do not have that rule in effect.)

*Turned down an overture from Cherokee Presbyterian Church, Woodstock, Georgia, which wanted to amend BCO 16 so as to specify that courts may direct a candidate for office not to teach his exception(s) to the constitutional standards. In making its unanimous (30-0-0) recommendation, the Bills & Overtures (B&O) Committee stated that the "powers of the Presbytery with respect to this issue are well defined in the Constitution . . . and have been carefully and consistently construed by the General Assembly in judicial cases. . . . Further, the proposed amendment introduces, without definition, terminology unknown to our Constitution, and thus liable to misinterpretation."

*Answered in the negative an overture from Susquehanna Valley Presbytery which sought to modify the Constitutional provisions with regard to re-ordaining a man who had been divested without censure for lack of a call for three years. The B&O Committee noted that Susquehanna Valley's first whereas ("the *Book of Church Order* rightly calls for a presbytery to divest a minister if he continues on the rolls without call for over three years"). The Committee said that a presbytery "may do as Potomac Presbytery in such cases, e.g., adopt a resolution as follows: 'That, upon review as required by BCO 13-2 and 34-10, and finding no culpable dereliction, nor evident lack of acceptance by the church, the following Teaching Elders be continued on the roll w/o call:

_____. This continuance is approved with the understanding that it shall be reviewed annually, and with the understanding that each candidate shall have the responsibility to demonstrate that a continued absence of call is not the result of "breach of his covenant engagement", or "lack of acceptance to the church". . . ."

Continued on page 22

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Southern Florida Admits Error in Allowing Women to Lead in Public Worship

Tampa, Florida (June 23, 2000)—Southern Florida Presbytery has admitted that it erred when it allowed a woman to lead in prayer during public worship, and another woman to read Scripture during the same service. The Presbytery took this action in response to the action of the 1997 General Assembly which took exception to its minutes regarding the practice.

As reported by the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records, "Presbytery is sorry that exception occurred and will seek to prevent it from happening again."

When the matter was first raised at the Assembly three years ago, a significant discussion ensued on the floor. After intense debate, the court took exception to the Presbytery's minutes.

In 1998, the Presbytery reported that it was not sure why the Assembly had taken that action. The Assembly that year referred the lower court to I Corinthians 14:34; I Timothy 2:11-15; and the Westminster Larger Catechism, Questions 155-159. The Scripture references speak of women keeping silent in the church. The Catechism questions refer to the reading of the Word and the preaching of the Word as being official ministerial-type acts.

In 1999, no response from the Presbytery was reported, prompting that year's Assembly to re-instruct the Presbytery to respond.

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Editorials and Letters

Overall, It Was A Good Assembly

When you attend a General Assembly you can often get a sense—a “feel,” if you will—of how the Assembly has gone. As I have reflected on this year’s General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), I have come away with a pretty good feeling.

Oh, it’s not that every vote went the way I would have desired. I was especially concerned over the decision on the doctrine of creation. My concern is not only because of possible ramifications down the road, but also because of the fact that many people may conclude that the denomination’s declining to take a stance in favor of six calendar days of creation means that she is irretrievably awash.

Other disappointments included the adoption of a new policy on women being permitted to speak in seminars, thus opening the door for distaff expositions of Scripture to a mixed audience; and the failure to speak clearly that the Covenant College choir singing in a Roman Catholic mass was inappropriate.

Of course, one can find silver linings even in these dark clouds. We do not believe that the action regarding Covenant College indicates so much a softness toward Rome, as a willingness to give the college the benefit of the doubt. If another such incident were to occur in the future, we trust that the Assembly reaction would be a bit less flexible. With regard to the new women’s policy, we believe that it is an error to place women in teaching positions over men. We also believe that the notion that the church may entertain “non-authoritative” teaching is sad, not to mention dangerous. Nevertheless, the Assembly did clearly speak that, with respect to worship, women are not to exercise a teaching role. In all candor, this is with all probability the position the PCA has always had throughout

its relatively brief history. So, although there was not movement in a more conservative direction, neither was any ground lost.

And with regard to the doctrine of creation, I have said all along that this is going to be a long, drawn-out theological battle. It is unrealistic to think that a century and a half of confusion within American Presbyterianism with regard to the days of creation, is going to be turned back in just a couple of years. We believe that what is needed now is for the lower courts—particularly the presbyteries—to exercise their prerogatives in interpreting the Constitution. As the Assembly itself acknowledged, the *in thesi* deliverance on creation has no binding force whatsoever, but was simply the opinion of the 28th Assembly.

On the bright side, the overturning of the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) decision in the John Wood matter was welcomed, not because I bear the Rev. Wood any malice (quite the contrary, he is a very gifted pastor and teacher) but because I believe it rightly checks the power and abuses of the SJC, provides a judicial venue to address this error on the part of Cedar Springs, and demonstrates the wisdom of the procedures found in the *Book of Church Order*. The majority of the Assembly, earlier frustrated by the darkness of procedural abyss during the creation discussion, decided to follow the lead of the Bills & Overtures Committee, against the combined weight of the SJC and the Committee on Constitutional Business (CCB). I give the praise to God for the outcome, while at the same time expressing appreciation for the courage of the Bills & Overtures (B&O) Committee, and for Dan Carrell, B&O Chairman, who calmly and methodically demolished the SJC’s and CCB’s position. It was a memorable scene, one which will probably go down in the history books as a turning point in American Presbyterian history.

The deliberate decision not to divide Westminster Presbytery along theological lines was another key decision. The Assembly could have acted in a callous or pragmatic manner by granting the division, thereby

setting the stage for an eventual cleavage across the church. But the Assembly instead took a pastoral approach, seeking personal and theological reconciliation (or at least toleration) for Westminster and its members, believing that the different “sides” had not had sufficient opportunity to wrestle through the Scriptures on the controverted issues.

And, of course, I was quite pleased with the overwhelming rejection of the overtures which called into question the operations of *P&R News*. Moreover, the opportunity for dialogue with the B & O Committee set the record straight on many issues regarding our method of operation which had previously been misunderstood, thus clearing the air.

Beyond any particular decisions, however, we were pleased with the overall tone or tenor of this Assembly. Last year, I and numerous others were rather distressed by what seemed to be a cavalier attitude toward truth and righteousness. But this year, we can gladly report that there was a greater seriousness by the Assembly as it approached its business.

The Church in this life is never going to be perfect. She remains the Church militant, until the day when the last trump sounds. But we are encouraged to think that God has not finished blessing this particular manifestation of the Bride of Christ, the Presbyterian Church in America. And I exhort my readers to continue to work and pray toward her continued reformation, even as we await an outpouring of God’s Spirit which will effect a mighty revival and transformation. Even so, come Lord, send your latter rains (Joel 3)!

—Bob Shapiro

Welcome Aboard!

We want to take this opportunity to welcome the official web-based magazine, PCANEWS.COM, to the church press community. Its Editor, Dominic Aquila, is an old family friend of ours, and we wish him well in this new venture.

As he acknowledged in a recent interview in *Christian Renewal* magazine, his is a difficult assignment. The usual tendency in such a position is to be bland, lest offense be given to those who write the paycheck. The challenge, therefore, is to be interesting enough to keep readership and candid enough to establish credibility, without at the same time bringing discredit upon the institution.

We can genuinely empathize with the new Editor in this daunting task, and we pledge our support in any way we can be of service. Indeed, we look forward to working with him in helping our mutual constituency to understand the struggles and the triumphs of our beloved denomination. —Frank J. Smith

Letters

To the Editor:

Mr. Shapiro recently published a correction to his piece concerning *World Magazine*’s refusal to publish Trinity Foundation’s Reformation Day Statement. Unfortunately, I would like to take issue with a couple of points, particularly those raised by Mr. Belz, CEO of *World Magazine*, in his attempt to set the record straight. The issue of *World*’s failure to run the Reformation Day Statement (RDS) was not specifically a matter of a breach of contract on *World*’s part, although Dr. Robbins had every expectation when dealing with a Christian publication to expect their “yes be yes” and that the ad would be run as originally reported in your article (V5, issue 4), rather, the issue had to do with the

reasons why *World* decided to pull the ad at the last minute.

I wrote Mr. Belz concerning this issue back in October of last year and received a telephone call from Mr. Belz on December 13 responding to my letter. During our conversation Mr. Belz said he would have probably published the RDS “without question” if it had been submitted by any of the other signatories such as R.C. Sproul or D. James Kennedy, but he didn’t want *World Magazine* to be a vehicle for Dr. Robbins to “build his mailing list.” The clear implication is that *World*’s original claim that the RDS was “unloving” is false and the only thing that made the statement “unloving,” at least in the mind of Mr. Belz, was because it was penned by Dr. Robbins.

Mr. Belz also said Dr. Robbins had published articles critical of *World* in the pages of *Trinity Review* [TR]. As someone who has read virtually every issue of TR since their inception, I told Mr. Belz I didn’t recall ever once reading a critical remark concerning *World* in TR, and, while I admitted it might have been an oversight on my part, Mr. Belz was unable to tell me when these critical remarks appeared or why criticism of *World* should preclude someone from running a paid advertisement in their magazine. . . .

Finally, as one of those signers, I think the RDS accurately expresses the truth of Jesus Christ particularly in light of the surrender many professing Evangelicals have made on their way back to Rome. Consequently, it seems to me that the epitome of biblical love is to express the truth of Jesus Christ accurately and forthrightly, which is all that Dr. Robbins and Trinity Foundation have done. . . .

By His Grace,
Sean Gerety
4620 Notely Court, Virginia Beach, VA 23456
PH 757-467-1897

Dear *P&R News*, Fathers, Brethren, and Sisters in Christ:

In the Jan-Feb 2000 issue of *P&R News* [p.14], the Editor asked in his title piece, “IS the PCA Reformable?” The first sentence contained the declaration that the PCA “is in deep trouble.” In view of the Reformed tradition’s theological understanding of the Church, the PCA is to be “ecclesia reformata, ecclesia reformanda”—that is, a reformed church is one that is being reformed. Hence, I do not regard the Editorial as inherently harmful to the PCA, but on the contrary helpful, inasmuch as problems and struggles and divisiveness are “par for the course,” as golfing Pastors might say. St. Paul even declared that divisions of sorts are to be expected, even necessary. [I Cor. 11:18-19], with the result that we ought not to be surprised when we preach that Christians “sin daily in thought, word, and deed,” and then we observe that Christians “sin daily in thought, word, and deed.” But then, Pastors et al. are seemingly

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Editorial Policy

Whenever we do stories such as interviews, or coverage of church services, it is the policy of *P&R News* to provide advance (preprint) copy to those interviewed, to ensure accuracy and to solicit feedback. Coverage of general events, such as General Assembly and other denominational meetings, does not allow for that type of response. *P&R News* strives very hard to be fair to all people concerned, and we believe that most journalists would be amazed (and some have expressed amazement) that we allow people on whom we are reporting to help shape both the content and tone of our article(s).

SURPRISED when sinful thoughts and words and deeds come to light.

Therefore, one may well ponder the PCA as a denomination LIKE ALL OTHERS if we really believe the previous characterization. Of course, it hurts our denominational pride to admit that we are "LIKE ALL OTHERS" since that hurts our personal pride as well. Thus, I suggest, upon serious reflection by way of comparison and contrast—how else is REFLECTION to take place?—that the PCA is a "liberal" Church already, and I offer the following observations for our critique:

1.) It is doubtful that the PCA can be preserved over the long haul—unless God grants it a History unlike all other denominations since Century One A.D. But why should this be surprising to ministers theologically trained in Church History? The struggle is always a struggle against sin and Satan without, and sin within. The struggle is a reformanda, a reforming struggle characterized by victories and losses.

4.) The PCA appears to be pro-abortion. The routine position for most PCA Christians is: I am against abortion EXCEPT . . . Upon closer analysis, this means: I am pro-abortion up to the point of approving abortion in cases of rape, incest, and danger to the life of the mother. Of course, on this terrible issue, I take the same basic position. Therefore, I am pro-abortion up to a point etc. and must confess to being in the same dilemma I am criticizing. Only, in my dilemma I at least admit the inconsistency rather than gloss over it. The TRULY anti-abortion position is, of course, the consistent Roman Catholic position regularly espoused by Dr. Alan Keyes: NO murder of a fetus regardless!

5.) A Covenant Seminary professor has apparently supported civil unions for homosexuals, as reported in the Jan-Feb 2000 *P&R News*, so that they may merit health insurance and other civil and economic benefits. Why not, I ask, support State abortuaries?

If the professor at the PCA seminary can bifurcate his theology condemning homosexual actions on the one hand as unnatural and immoral and sinful and against God's Law, why not similarly embrace Roe vs. Wade and also FIND in the US Constitution "the right to privacy"?

In speaking with one Board member of CTS about the professor's position, the Board member informed me that he had known the professor for many years and was certain that that was NOT really his position.

The *P&R News* Editor merely asked, "IS the PCA Reformable?"

The facile response of the CTS Board member points to the UNLIKELIHOOD of reform, especially since "knowing a professor for many years" etc. sounds fundamentally like a kind of Situation Ethics we heard from Joseph Fletcher at Boston University in the 1960s.

Since the *P&R News* is the only independent newspaper that provides indepth reporting on the GA, the Presbyteries, and the congregations, it seems to me that PCA churches should continue to fund voluntarily this source of reporting: not infallible reporting, but seemingly an attempt at CAREFUL reporting, with ERRORS corrected in later editions—the only avenue open to PCAers who "sin daily in thought, word, and deed."

Attacks on *P&R News* ought to be moderated by the overarching NEED for such a paper.

[REV.]Robert H. Countess, Ph.D.
US Army Chaplain, CAPT, Retired
28755 Sagewood Circle, Toney, AL 35773
email: boblpinc@earthlink.net

Presbyterian International News Service, Please stop sending me the *Presbyterian and Reformed News*. I am a teaching elder in the PCA and have vowed not to read "gossip" news any longer. I appreciate your desire to cover the news in our denomination but it does NOT "advance fellowship, piety, and orthodoxy". Quite the contrary it undermines all three of those.

Please also do not send me bulk copies of the *Presbyterian and Reformed News* at my Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary address any longer. I do not believe it is wise to put these into the hands of students at an evangelical seminary. The paper inculcates a "ethos of distrust" and this strikes me as undermining the very heart of the gospel.
Sincerely, Richard Lints

Dear Mr. Shapiro,

This letter is written to complain about the *Presbyterian and Reformed News*' November 1999 publication; it widely publicized events taking place within the Susquehanna Valley Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America that occurred during executive session. The very purpose of entering executive session is to limit the sensitive information from having broad distribution. With your insensitive publication of various facts, you have shunted those efforts by our Presbytery.

The Susquehanna Valley Presbytery is currently pursuing discipline action with a brother; the purpose of this action is to protect the purity of the Church while attempting the restoration of our brother. With your publication, you have seriously harmed the reputation of a brother prior to the conclusion of the discipline process and placed stumbling blocks in our path toward restoration. Please read over the meditate on the Larger Catechism discussion of the ninth commandment, questions 144 and 145, particularly that it includes the duty of "preserving and promoting . . . the good name of our neighbor" and forbids the sin of "all prejudicing the truth, and the good name of our neighbors."

The Susquehanna Valley Presbytery calls on you, not only cease from similar future publication involving any Presbytery, but to repent of this callous and sinful action. We look forward to hearing your response to this call for repentance.

Serving the King,
David F. Rundle, Clerk of Presbytery

[We sincerely apologize for anything that we have done amiss. It is noteworthy, we believe, to point out that: (1) the minister involved was not mentioned in the article by name; (2) action undertaken by a court, whether in open or closed session, is public, by definition; (3) this understanding is bolstered by the fact that the widely-disseminated minutes from Susquehanna Valley were a seamless whole—i.e., information which the Presbytery wants to keep confidential is to be kept in a separate set of (executive session) minutes, which in this case was not done; and (4) it appeared to us that what we published was an integral part of the Presbytery's action. Again, our sincerest apologies if we misunderstood.—Ed.]

POLICY REGARDING LETTERS

The policy of *P&R News* is to print all of the signed letters-to-the-editor that we receive. We encourage our readers to share their thoughts with us. Letters may be sent via email (pins@journalist.com) or via snail mail, 905 Dogwood Park Drive, Lawrenceville, GA 30045

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To the Editor:

Special thanks for publishing the article by Elder Fred Greco on his trip to Ukraine with Christ for Russia. Communism, as Michael Novak noted, "waged a silent war against the human soul". Christ for Russia is being used by God to rebuild what that war destroyed by serving the indigenous Reformed churches of the former Soviet Union. Our mission is to "equip reliable leaders in sound doctrine" by establishing seminaries and pastoral training centers, assembling theological libraries, and translating and publishing solid biblical literature. We exist to equip national believers with the biblical tools to do the work of ministry in their own cultural contexts.

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Sincerely,
Rev. Leon D. Pannkuk,
Chairman of the Board, Christ for Russia
Teaching Elder, Missouri Presbytery

Dear Mr. Shapiro:

Greetings to you in the grace that is ours through faith in Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and man.

I write to inform you that a statement printed on page two of the May-June 2000 issue of the *Presbyterian and Reformed News* is simply not true. The statement, under the header, Unity of the Church, reads: "In April 2000, he was received by Central Florida Presbytery, without that court having informed South Coast of the situation or having allowed the California counterpart to pursue the judicial case."

The statement is not attributed to anyone as a quote, nor is it attributed to language from the overture referred to in the final paragraph of the brief article. It is stated as a matter of fact, a fact presumably verified by the reporter from the record or persons of Central Florida Presbytery.

Had the question been asked of the Stated Clerk of Central Florida or the Chairman of the

Minister and His Work Committee of Central Florida Presbytery handling the matter, "Had you been in contact with South Coast Presbytery about this issue prior to the April 18, 2000 meeting," the answer would have been an unqualified "Yes!"

In addition the statement of fact, "without . . . having allowed the California counterpart to pursue the judicial case" is inaccurate as stated. Central Florida has no jurisdiction over South Coast to "disallow" any judicial action on their part.

This statement may be the result of a late night at the office before at print deadline. Nevertheless, this unsubstantiated false statement gives a false testimony about Central Florida Presbytery and should be retracted with as much editorial force as it was made.

My purpose is not to defend our actions on the pages of your newspaper. We will do that through means available at General Assembly. My purpose is to encourage more accurate reporting in the future for the purity and peace of the Church and the honor of our common Savior. Let us speak the truth in love, for the building up of the Body.

Sincerely,
Donald L. Mountan, Stated Clerk of Central
Florida Presbytery, Clermont, Florida

[Editor's Note: We want to thank our long-time friend, Don Mountan, for his letter. It is our understanding that no official correspondence had been sent from Central Florida to South Coast; and it was on that basis that we stated that South Coast had not been informed of the situation, since there had been no "official" correspondence. In the larger article which dealt with the matter, we stated that a minister from Central Florida "responded to South Coast's overture by stating that Central Florida had been told that South Coast had been contacted, and that there was no problem from South Coast's perspective. . . ." However, if there was no letter from one Stated Clerk to another, then there was no "official" notification.

With respect to the point that Central Florida had not "allowed" South Coast to pursue the judicial case, it is probably more accurate to say that Central Florida did not itself pursue the matter. The *Book of Church Order* says that "When an offense, alleged to have been committed at a distance, is not likely otherwise to become known to the court having jurisdiction, it shall be the duty of the court within whose bounds the facts occurred, after satisfying itself that there is probable ground for accusation, to send notice to the court having jurisdiction, which shall at once proceed against the accused; or the whole case may be remitted for trial to the coordinate court within whose bounds the offense is alleged to have been committed" (32-9). In this case, there is no question that Central Florida Presbytery was aware of the charges. But there is no indication that Central Florida proceeded immediately to trial, or remitted the case to South Coast.—FJS.]



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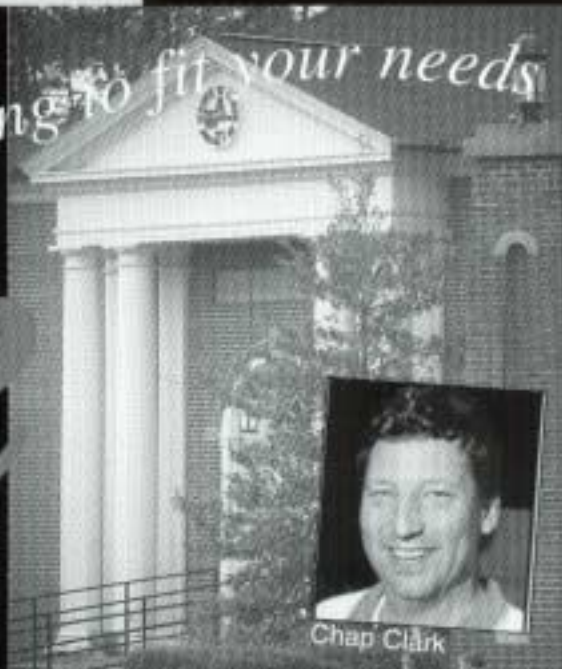
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Atlanta Rally Calls Attention to Plight of Sudanese Christians

Atlanta, Georgia (June 9, 2000)—Atlanta was baking under the equivalent

magazine of the terrible situation in Sudan, as he declared: "We are concerned about Sudan because of the slavery of Christians who are there." He also sounded a warning with regard to religious liberty: we shouldn't think that this is just a problem "over there," since problems "over there" have a way of finding their way "over here", and it might not be too long before Christians are being persecuted here, too. "There are more Christians who are under persecution today than in my lifetime," he stated.

characterized by pride and arrogance; and the United Nations, which unites "for different causes." By way of contrast, the Christian church is able to manifest the true unity.

Mr. Howard poignantly recalled holding the hands of people in Sudan who are dying, and the hands of babies who haven't had food. But he reiterated that the solution is the gospel of Jesus Christ: "that's the primary source of blessing in the world today. . . . Government can't do it."

In his view, "The answer to Sudan is Jesus Christ. . . . I believe in planting [the gospel] in Sudan," and in other African countries. "I believe this will have a significant impact on America. . . . America has become a slave to its own ambition." The preacher continued: "The Bible says that this world belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Sudan does not belong to the anarchists, . . . to the slave-traders, . . . to the devil, it belongs to God. . . . I believe Sudan can become a prosperous nation on the earth today." The same grace that is in America, can come to fruition in Sudan. The "same gospel can permeate the atmosphere."

Christians] to hold each other accountable."

Completing the complement of speakers was Elder Abraham Makoi Cithol, a Sudanese pastor who heads the New Sudan Presbyterian Church. Mr. Cithol reminded his listeners that the country of Sudan is mentioned numerous



American and Sudanese musicians attract the attention of passers-by.

of a sub-Saharan sun. On the grounds of the state capitol, a group of several dozen had gathered. Black and white, American and Sudanese, had come to bear testimony against the unspeakable horrors being perpetrated by the Muslim government in Khartoum against Christians.

This was one of 23 rallies in cities across the United States being held on this particular day in order to call attention to the ongoing persecution, slavery, and genocide in Sudan. Out of a total population of 38 million people, an estimated 2 million, mostly Christians, have been killed over the past fifteen years as a result of government policies.

The effort today was the result of The Sudan Campaign, an outreach of Christian Solidarity International. Spearheading the Atlanta rally was the Rev. Marvin Williams, a member of the interdenominational Synod of the City.

The first speaker today was the Rev. Dr. Ben Wilkinson, a minister of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). His rousing address called upon those gathered—as well as the curious passers-by—to submit to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Wilkinson, who was the progenitor of the Synod of the City, addressed the question as to why people in Atlanta should be thinking about Sudan. He first appealed to Jesus' statements in Matthew 25—that when "you have done it to the least of these my

Not only is there persecution on religious grounds—there is also an economic factor. Southern Sudan is where valuable products are found: both the material from which cola is made, and now oil.

Ben Wilkinson concluded by saying: "We're concerned in the Synod of the



Dr. Ben Wilkinson preaches to the crowd.

City in bringing the city under the Lordship of Jesus Christ." Referring to the Sudanese refugees, he added: "These dear ones, in the name of Christ, must be helped in the name of Christ."

Pastor Randy Howard of the Greater Hope Covenant Church, Lake City, Georgia, was introduced next. The minister declared, "I'm not looking to the government to solve a spiritual problem. . . . But I am looking to the nations whom God has blessed. . . ." He pleaded for Christians to pray: "prayer ought to mobilize us."

The pastor alluded to false efforts at unity, such the Tower of Babel,

Christian's responsibility to seek justice. "The righteousness of God will ultimately prevail," proclaimed the pastor. "God's law is still superior to man's law. And in due time, His law shall be exalted even above what is going on today. . . . Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season you shall reap if you faint not. . . . God will, not might, God will surely bring justice to pass in Sudan."

Mr. Bryant, who pastors Bethesda Baptist Church of Villa Rica, Georgia, said that "those of us of color . . . want to remind our President, . . . our Governor, our Mayor, that God holds us responsible for what is right and wrong. . . . It is our responsibility [as

times in the Bible, under a variety of names, including Kush and Nubia. He spoke passionately of the "political, economic, and religious war" being waged against the 28 millions of people in the south of Sudan (94 per cent of which are Christians).

There are approximately 200 parishioners in the immigrant congregation. Many more refugees from Sudan are expected to arrive in America, and in Atlanta, by the end of the summer.

Today's rally marched to its conclusion. Loud music from the band provided entertainment, while many of those who had gathered for the rally retreated to the shadows of the Capitol to take refuge from the mid-day Nubian sun. An African beat pulsated through the sultry air, as the Sudanese swayed to the music and waved to the traffic on the busy street.

Placards portrayed the devastation of the situation in Sudan. Hearts united in prayer and out of concern for blood relatives, as well as spiritual brothers and sisters never before seen. And a materialistic world passed by, oblivious to the pain and the suffering and the spiritual realities playing themselves out thousands of miles away.

[Editor's note: Those wishing to become involved in The Sudan Campaign are encouraged to contact the national office at (888)212-5044; (202)822-6106(f); website: campaignforsudan.org.]



A graphic portrayal of the horrors in Sudan

brethren, you have done it unto me." The pastor referred to the coverage in *World*



Sudanese sway to the music and wave to the traffic.



Hearts and hands unite as God's people pray.

Official Denominational Magazine Reports Westminster Presbytery Still 'Divided' Controversy Erupts over Reception of R. C. Sproul, Jr.: Now He's In, Now He Isn't

PCANEWS.COM, the new denominational web-based magazine for the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), has reported that Westminster Presbytery is "still divided." The story, which has no by-line, was dated July 17, 2000, and dispatched from Elizabethton, Tennessee. The article says: "At its first stated meeting following the 28th General Assembly's decision not to divide it, Westminster Presbytery, meeting on July 15 at the Memorial Presbyterian Church in Elizabethton, Tenn., adjourned abruptly at 4:30 PM without completing its approved agenda, most likely indicating the continuation of internal division."

The story goes on to report on the examination of R. C. Sproul, Jr., son of the famed PCA theologian and seminary professor. "Just before the Presbytery went into executive session to discuss Sproul's exam and request for reception into the PCA, he was asked his view on Christian Education and the home. His response evoked quite a bit of debate on the floor of the Presbytery. He indicated that if one of the ruling elders in his church allowed his children to attend a government sponsored school, he would see that as a sin and a chargeable offense. He did indicate that while he had never charged

anyone with such an offense, he would consider doing so."

In an exclusive interview with *Presbyterian & Reformed News*, Mr. Sproul gave a slightly different version of his views. He stated that he was asked if he believed a ruling elder who sends his children to a government school was "outside the faith," to which he responded, "No, but I believe that anyone who does so would be in sin and I would confront him on it." He stated that he had indicated that he would not pursue excommunication on the matter unless the General Assembly or Presbytery judged that to be a gross and heinous sin. He also indicated that, if the matter were brought to a vote in the Presbytery, he would vote that such a practice was such a sin.

PCANEWS.COM's story continues: "At some point while the Presbytery was still in executive session (Editor's note: executive session is when a body discusses issues behind closed doors, the content of the discussion is not divulged outside of that meeting, and only actions taken, if any, are reported to the 'open' session), a motion was made to adjourn the Presbytery meeting. The motion passed even though a number of committee reports remained on the agenda,

as well as the consideration of two complaints."

Not reported in the denominational magazine's news story, but later reported via the Rev. Pat Parham's letter-to-the-editor, is the fact that the court approved Mr. Sproul for transfer from the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church by a vote of 27-5. Immediately after that vote was taken, an unusual and obscure parliamentary move was undertaken: a presbyter moved that the matter be reconsidered and entered on the record. This little-used motion was designed under parliamentary procedure to prevent a matter from being reconsidered at a meeting where a temporary majority could undo a previously-passed motion. The motion to reconsider and enter on the record, which must automatically be granted, mandates that the matter not be taken up until the next session of the assembly. Under Roberts Rules, the motion also stops the original action from taking effect.

Accordingly, the action in receiving R. C. Sproul, Jr., was rendered null and void—at least until the motion to reconsider can be taken up. Presumably, that will occur at the next stated meeting of Westminster Presbytery on October 14th, or before then at a special meeting called for that purpose.

Mr. Sproul has been pastoring St. Peter

Presbyterian Church in Bristol, Tennessee. The congregation reflects a highly-liturgical approach to worship not usually encountered in Presbyterian circles. The church recently voted to leave the ARP, purportedly because of the action of Tennessee-Alabama Presbytery in dismissing the York (Ala.) Presbyterian Church from the denomination. The York church has become embroiled in a civil suit brought by an elder who had had disciplinary proceedings brought against him. St. Peter Church, concerned about that action and possible ramifications, decided to be unaffiliated for the time being.

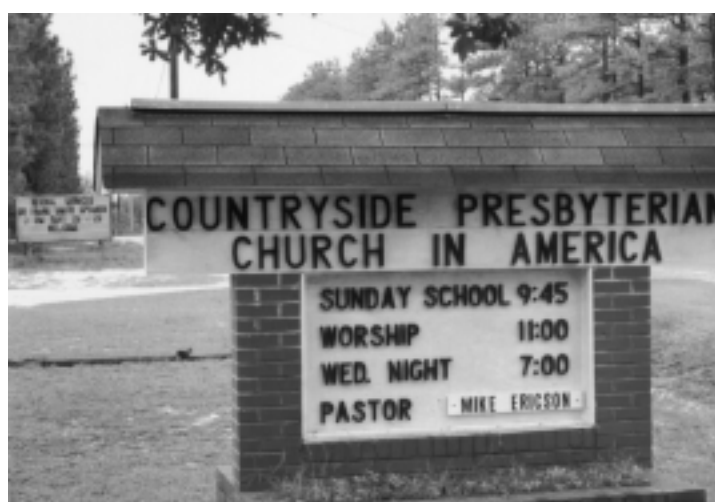
Besides his views on government schools and a commitment to liturgical worship, Mr. Sproul was also questioned closely with respect to his view on paedocommunion. He indicated that, although he believes that all covenant children should partake of the Lord's Supper, he is willing to abide by the denominational position that only those who make profession of faith should participate in communion. He also takes exception to the Standards' view on the Sabbath, as he believes that some forms of non-strenuous recreation may be permissible.

Tom Henry Wins Unanimous Approval to Become Senior Pastor at Prominent Church Central Carolina Also Brings Closure to Controversy over Interfaith Celebration

At its stated meeting on July 15, 2000, Central Carolina Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) gave its unanimous approval to the Rev. Tom Henry becoming Senior Pastor of Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church, Matthews, North Carolina. Mr. Henry, who had been Associate Pastor at the prominent PCA congregation in suburban Charlotte, and who had also served as Interim Pastor since last year, was called by the congregation to succeed the Rev. Harry Reeder.

Under PCA rules, an assistant or associate pastor may become senior pastor without an intervening time of service in a different field of labor, but only with a

supermajority vote by both congregation and presbytery. Four-fifths of the congregation must vote affirmatively for the call, and the concurrence by presbytery must be at least a three-fourths vote. Prior to a 1985 amendment to the *Book of Church Order*, an assistant or associate could not succeed the senior pastor without serving in some other call.



Countryside Presbyterian Church, located in the Sandhills outside of Cameron, North Carolina, was the site of the July stated meeting of Central Carolina Presbytery. The pastor of Countryside is the Rev. Mike Ericson, who had sought satisfaction with regard to the controversy surrounding the Rev. Tom Henry's participation in an interfaith celebration.

As reported in PCANEWS.COM, Christ Covenant Church is one of the larger

congregations in the denomination and in the Charlotte area. The web magazine stated: "The church's many ministries include Covenant Day School, Campus Outreach chapters at regional colleges and universities, SOAR youth sports league, community services, and short-term mission trips to various countries and locales within the United States. The congregation also sponsors church planting projects as a part of its commitment to missions and evangelism." Not reported in the official denominational magazine was the final disposition of a controversy concerning Mr. Henry's participation in an interfaith celebration. *The Charlotte World*, a newspaper which caters to a Christian readership, had reported on the spring equinox event at which Mr. Henry spoke. At its April stated meeting, Central Carolina Presbytery received an overture from the Rev. Mike Ericson, asking the Presbytery to have Mr. Henry explain his actions. The Presbytery received written responses from Mr. Henry and the Session of Christ Covenant Church, and deemed them to be "adequate."

Not satisfied with that action, Mr. Ericson filed a complaint, which forced the court to re-visit the issue. His basic concern was the fact that Mr. Henry had not formally acknowledged that he erred by participating in an interfaith litany (see the May/June 2000 issue of *P&R News*, pp. 10-11). Although Mr. Henry had not led or written the litany, he did enter into it with the other people gathered for the event.

Mr. Ericson eventually withdrew the

complaint, upon the spreading on the record the following motion: "that Presbytery receive the oral statement of Mr. Tom Henry as delivered to the Presbytery at its meeting on April 22, 2000, as giving adequate explanation of his participation in the Equinox Interfaith Celebration, Monday, March 20, 2000,

declaring that he in fact did proclaim the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, that his presence was similar to Paul's on Mars' Hill, that he should have made clear to the audience that he was not participating in any type of worship, and that he was wrong to have read the litany and would not do so in the future."

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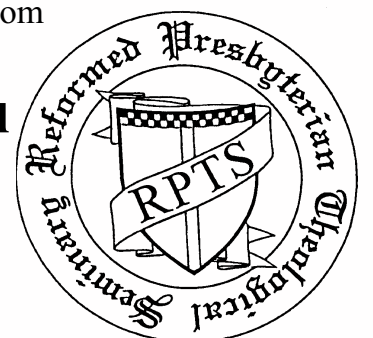
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News From the Presbyteries

Central Carolina

The 81st Stated Meeting of Central Carolina Presbytery met on Saturday, April 22, 2000, at Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The Moderator, the Rev. Alex Coblenz, called the meeting to order and presided. Pastor Steve Angle preached from Galatians 3 on the removal of the curse.

With respect to the docket, it was moved and seconded to recess at lunch and to reconvene at an evening to be determined by the Moderator and Clerk, and that Presbytery not meet on Easter weekend in the future. The motion failed, 26-37.

Various commission reports were received: to install the Rev. Randy Edwards as Assistant Pastor at Grace Presbyterian Church, Kernersville, North Carolina; to organize Hope Church, Winston-Salem, North Carolina; to install the Rev. C. Hunter Dockery as Pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Winston-Salem; and to install the Rev. John Williams as Pastor of Faith Presbyterian Church, Mt. Mourne, North Carolina.

Presbytery voted to continue to pay \$1000 per month to the Rev. Phillip Nelson as severance compensation for the months of April through June.

The court voted to establish a mission church in Asheboro, North Carolina, under

the oversight of the Session of Meadowview Church.

The Rev. Jim White was given the powers of evangelist to receive new members, for a period of one year.

The Presbytery rescinded the internships and candidacies of Mark South and Adam Greer, who are no longer seeking calls. Presbytery approved the completed internship of Phil Hargrove.

The court examined and approved for ordination Clint Dowda. He expressed an exception to the Confessional Standards: "If recreation would contribute positively to worship, mercy, necessity and rest, I would not oppose it [on the Sabbath], as long as my session concurred." Mr. Dowda was being called to be an Assistant Pastor at Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Winston-Salem.

Mr. Jeffrey Mays was examined for licensure. It was moved and seconded that he not be permitted to teach or preach his view on paedocommunion. That motion failed, 26-31. The main motion to approve his licensure exam failed, 13-46. He was remanded to the care of the Candidates Committee for continued oversight.

The court found in order a complaint from Ruling Elder Ben Knox, and appointed a commission to adjudicate it. Consideration of an overture from the Rev. Dan Bartel on covenantal patriarchy was delayed, per his request.

The Rev. Mike Ericson presented an overture regarding a report in *The Charlotte World* newspaper concerning the participation of the Rev. Tom Henry in an interfaith gathering [see the May-June 2000 edition of P&R News for coverage of the controversy—Ed.]. Mr. Henry addressed the court on the matter and answered questions. He said he could not remember if he said "Amen" to the litanies. It was moved, seconded, and approved to receive the written responses from the Session of Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church, Matthews, North Carolina, and from Mr. Henry as giving adequate explanation of the matter, and to spread these on the Presbytery minutes, along with the article in question. Ruling Elder Paul English, who is Managing Editor of *The Charlotte World*, abstained from the vote. The Moderator asked the Shepherding Committee to monitor the situation to see if any further action is needed. After the lunch break, a motion to reconsider the action on this matter failed, 7-41.

The court reconvened after lunch with the singing of a hymn, and then adopted a resolution to the North Carolina Legislature in opposition to a state-run lottery.

These men were received under care as ministerial candidates: Mark Blalack, Tom Brown, Chris Deneen, Greg Farrand, Greg Taylor, and James Beyers. The following internships were approved: for Mr. Beyers and Mr. Deneen at Christ Covenant Church; and for Joe Kennedy at Southlake Presbyterian Church.

On April 9, 2000, the Lucia Presbyterian Church, Castanea, North Carolina, voted, 34-22-1, to seek the dissolution of the pastoral relationship with the Rev. Tom Shields. Mr. Shields does not agree with this decision. Nevertheless, the Presbytery concurred with the recommendation of its Shepherding Committee to dissolve the relationship, noting that the severance package includes three months salary and benefits plus paying him for three weeks of vacation that he had not taken. Presbytery asks the Session to meet with the Shepherding Committee before calling another pastor.

Covenant

Covenant Presbytery met in its 88th Stated Meeting on Tuesday, February 1, 2000, at the Christ Presbyterian Church, Olive Branch, Mississippi. Mr. Matt Schilling preached a sermon at the opening communion service, which included the observance of the Lord's Supper.

The Rev. Grover Gunn gave his Stated Clerk's report. Presbytery admitted to record the following commission reports and approved the actions on behalf of presbytery documented in the subject commission reports: Report of the Church Care Committee acting as a commission on 11/11/99 to dissolve the relationship between TE Claude McRoberts and the First PC, Clarksdale, Mississippi, and to dismiss Mr. McRoberts to Southeast Alabama Presbytery pending reception; Report of the Church Care Committee acting as a commission on 01/04/00 to dissolve the relationship between TE Todd Teller and the Session of the First PC, Clarksdale, Mississippi, and to dismiss Mr. Teller to Central Georgia Presbytery pending reception; Reports of the New Beginnings Commission dated 08/30/99 and 11/30/99; Reports of the Hot Springs Commission dated 10/17/99, 11/13/99, 11/21/99, and 12/14/99; Commission to install TE Rob Thacker

as assistant pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, Greenwood, Mississippi, on 10/24/99.

Lee Mattox, Presbytery Treasurer, presented his report, which was received as printed. The bank balance on January 1, 1999, was \$57,320.37, and as of the end of the year, it was \$42,280.90.

Presbytery designated \$10,000 from the unspent 1999 MNA budget to the MNA Church Planting Fund.

The Administration Committee recommended that, in accord with an overture from the Session of Christ Presbyterian Church, Olive Branch, Mississippi, Presbytery suspend the Standing Rules and hold the February 2001 stated meeting of Presbytery on the first Saturday in February 2001 as an experiment

in attendance at a Saturday stated meeting and that Presbytery postpone action on the overture until after that meeting. The committee recommendation failed by a vote of 30 for and 18 against with 1 abstaining (suspending the rules requires a two-thirds majority vote). Mr. Gunn moved from the floor that Presbytery request the session of Christ Presbyterian Church to provide Presbytery with proposed amendments to our Standing Rules which would accomplish their desired goal regarding presbytery meeting dates. The motion died for lack of a second.

Presbytery ratified the Committee's appointment of RE Clint Wood as Presbytery's respondent in Lawrence Rountree's appeal to General Assembly.

Presbytery received the petition from a group in north Jackson, Tennessee, and received them as a mission work of Covenant Presbytery. Funding of \$300 per month for the Hot Springs Mission was voted to be continued through the year 2000.

The Rev. Wayne Herring gave an encouraging report regarding the church planting possibilities in Jonesboro, Arkansas. He also reported that he had met with some young couples who may be interested in a church plant in South Germantown and a group of 10 families in Summerville, Tennessee, who are interested in starting a new church in that area. Dr. Howard Kimball gave a short report on the presbytery mission in Russellville, Arkansas.

The MNA Committee recommendation was approved to approve the 2000 budget for Reformed University Ministries/Mississippi along with the following changes in terms of call for the following campus ministers: Brian Habig — an increase in annual salary from \$34,682.00 to \$41,258.00, with associated benefits; Robbie Hinton — an increase in annual salary from \$28,291.00 to \$34,355.00, with associated benefits; Ricky Jones — an increase in annual salary from \$32,305 to \$38,691.00, with associated benefits; Les Newsom — an increase in annual salary from \$43,979 to \$47,497.00, with associated benefits. The court approved Mr. Newsom's transfer from the RUM work at the University of Memphis to the RUM work at Ole Miss.

Presbytery approved Mr. Scott Fleming's internship, and examined and approved him for ordination as Assistant Pastor at First Presbyterian Church, Dyersburg, Tennessee. The Presbytery also approved Mr. Matt Schilling's completed and approved internship in Mississippi Valley Presbytery as meeting Covenant Presbytery internship requirements and transferred his candidacy from Mississippi Valley Presbytery to Covenant Presbytery,

James Montgomery Boice, 1938-2000

Noted PCA pastor, author, theologian, and church statesman James Montgomery Boice passed away in his sleep on June 15, 2000. He was 61.

For 32 years, Dr. Boice pastored Tenth Presbyterian Church in downtown Philadelphia, and was since 1969 the radio voice of *The Bible Study Hour*. He was also instrumental in the founding of such endeavors as the Philadelphia Conference on Reformed Theology; the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy; and the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals.

Among the many books he authored were: *The Foundation of Biblical Authority*; *Does Inerrancy Matter?*; and commentaries on Genesis, Joshua, Nehemiah, the Minor Prophets, Daniel, the Gospel of John, Philippians, and the Epistles of John.

Ordained in the United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., James Boice was a staunch advocate of the Reformed perspective within that liberal denomination. In 1981, he led his congregation into the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, which denomination merged with the PCA the next year.

Dr. Boice was a featured speaker at the 1998 General Assembly in St. Louis, Missouri, in conjunction with the celebration of the denomination's twenty-fifth anniversary. In his address, he called on the commissioners to remain faithful to the Word of God. He stated that faithfulness to the Bible means not only adherence to the doctrine of inerrancy, but also to Scripture's sufficiency. He expressed his dismay at the increasing loss of traditional practices of worship in the evangelical world and in the PCA. He particularly decried the fact that readings of a significant amount of Scripture and pastoral prayers are often being omitted in worship; and that sermons today often do not entail the exegesis of a passage of Scripture. With respect to sanctification, he urged that the answer is knowledge of Christian doctrine which, sadly, is decreasing today. In contrast to those who would seek extra-Scriptural revelation, Dr. Boice emphasized a return to the Reformed doctrine of sola Scriptura.

At this year's Assembly, which convened five days after his passing, Dr. Boice was memorialized in a variety of ways, mostly through the introduction of new hymns which he had written. The Rev. Philip Tyken, who serves on staff at Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, introduced the first of these new hymns just prior to recess the first night of the Assembly. He noted that Dr. Boice, while in his weakened condition, was still able confidently to affirm his belief in the resurrection and the hope of eternal life—truths which he expressed in his hymn.

Dr. Boice's death came eight weeks after his having been diagnosed with liver cancer. He is survived by his wife and three daughters.



Dr. Boice, after his address to the 1998 General Assembly

all pending Mississippi Valley's approval of his completed internship at their upcoming February 15 stated meeting. Presbytery also examined him and approved him for ordination as pastor of Grenada (Miss.) Presbyterian Church.

Presbytery ratified the Candidate Committee's giving \$500 of Presbytery funds to Mr. Jeremy Huggins toward his education costs at Covenant Seminary. The Committee Chairman had inadvertently omitted Mr. Huggins' name when he authorized the distribution of the available funds for the current school year from the Covenant Theological Seminary Presbytery Scholarship Fund on behalf of Presbytery. Summary reports on candidates Robert Frederick, Jeremy Huggins, Dana Emborski, and John Dawson were given.

Presbytery transferred the Rev. Tim Horn from Mississippi Valley Presbytery, and the Rev. Dr. Tom Elkin from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Presbytery approved Mr. Horn to be Stated Supply at First Presbyterian Church, Clarksdale, Mississippi, and Dr. Elkin to be Adjunct Assistant Pastor at Independent Presbyterian Church, Memphis, Tennessee.

Changes in the terms of call for several ministers were approved. Covenant Presbytery voted to seek the concurrence of Mississippi Valley Presbytery to allow TE Jimmy Turner to labor with the Christian Medical Society of Mississippi within the geographic bounds of Mississippi Valley Presbytery.

Covenant Presbytery renewed the power of an evangelist to TE Carl Chaplin, missionary to the Czech Republic, in accordance with BCO 8-6.

It was reported that TE John Wingard had volunteered to take the position of editor of the presbytery newsletter, *The Covenant Herald*. Churches were encouraged to send information to Mr. Wingard for inclusion in the newsletter.

Eastern Carolina

Winter Meeting

The 80th Stated Meeting of Eastern Carolina was held on February 5, 2000, at Calvary Presbyterian Church, Raleigh, North Carolina. (The meeting had been postponed from January 29, 2000, due to the forecast of a major ice storm.)

The Rev. Fred Hofland preached from Jude 16-25.

Per his request, Mr. James Carter was removed as a candidate. Mr. Lindsey Williams was received as a candidate.

With gratitude for the outstanding performance of Mr. Austin Leake as Stated Clerk, the Committee on Administration moved that the provisions relating to the number of consecutive years of service be set aside. The Presbytery voted unanimously to set aside its standing rules, so that Mr. Austin Leake could be nominated as Stated Clerk. Mr. Leake was

Eastern Canada Update

Irish pastor Ian Crooks is planning to move to Miramichi, New Brunswick, this fall, as organizing pastor for Sovereign Community Mission. He sees the need to begin there, even though at this point there is a long way to go in raising the funding support which is needed. Normally it becomes much harder to raise support for someone already on the field. He is taking a step of faith that despite the normal patterns, support will come in after he has moved. Eastern Canada's Stated Clerk, Don Codling, asks, "Please pray that his faith will be rewarded."

elected by acclamation.

The Rev. Carl Brannan was elected Moderator; Deacon Brian Ellison was elected Treasurer; Ruling Elder Don Stark was elected Assistant Clerk; and the Rev. David Bowen was elected Parliamentarian.

It was announced that there was a shortfall of 26 per cent in receipts in 1999 compared to budget.

The Rev. Bob Fiol, Assistant to the Clerk of General Assembly, addressed the Presbytery. Also addressing the Presbytery was Miss Jill DeVere of Mission to the World to Ukraine.

After lunch, the ladies who had prepared the meal were introduced by name and then thanked "with raucous applause."

Eastern Carolina Presbytery agreed to sign the agreement entitled, "Campus Affiliation of Presbyteries and Churches with Reformed University Ministries of GA Mission to North America Presbyterian Church in America."

The Committee to Assist Ruling Elder Phillips was dissolved. The reports of the Commission to Ordain and Install Byron Peters and the Commission to Install TE Paul Zetterholm were received.

The Rev. Gordon Crompton was given the powers of evangelist over the New Covenant Presbyterian Church, Raleigh, in that all of the elders had resigned and/or moved, resulting in no Session at this time. He expects this to be a temporary situation, as an elder candidate is being trained.

Spring Meeting

The 81st Stated Meeting of Eastern Carolina Presbytery was held at Antioch Presbyterian Church, Goldsboro, North Carolina. The Moderator, Teaching Elder Carl Brannan, called the meeting to order and presided. Candidate Chris Garrett preached from Ephesians 3:14-21 for the communion service.

The Presbytery voted to lift the censure of indefinite suspension from the Rev. Don Riley and restored him to the full exercise of that office, with all the functions thereof. His wife, Susan, was present when the court removed the censure. The Presbytery sang the Old Hundredth, "All People That on Earth Do Dwell," and the Rev. Mr. Riley offered prayer.

Messrs. Steven Dilday, Ron Gilbert, and James Sutton were received under care as ministerial candidates.

The Presbytery approved the internship report of Mr. Chris Garrett. After examination, the court approved him for ordination, to be Assistant Pastor at Church of the Good Shepherd, with a call of \$45,000 plus benefits (up to \$6,900 plus family health insurance) and four weeks vacation. During the exam, a motion was made and seconded not to approve the theology portion of the exam. A substitute motion prevailed, viz., to approve the area of theology, noting his exception regarding the Christian Sabbath and printing it in the minutes. His statement said that "the restrictiveness of the Confession goes beyond that of the Scriptures (Col. 2:16; Mark 2:27-28). As part of my teaching ministry, I wish to warn against worldly entertainment and other distractions which obscure the worshipful, merciful and restful nature of the Sabbath, while not putting an undue burden on God's people."

The Moderator announced a shortfall of giving in relation to the budget of 19.6 per cent.

The congregation of Grace Church, Fuquay-Varina, North Carolina, requested the dissolution of the pastoral relationship with the pastor, the Rev. Ted Trefsgar. A motion was made and seconded to approve the dissolution of the pastoral relationship. A substitute motion was made and seconded that the Presbytery appoint a committee to see if Grace Presbyterian Church has just grounds for its request and to report to the Presbytery at its July meeting, and further that the committee instruct the members of the church of its constitutional options. That substitute motion failed. Another substitute motion was made, to appoint a commission to handle the matter of the dissolution of the pastoral relationship. During the discussion, a substitute

motion for the whole was made, to have a called meeting of Presbytery on Saturday, April 29, 2000, to deal with the matters regarding Grace Presbyterian Church and Mr. Trefsgar. That substitute for the whole failed. At that point, the substitute motion, to appoint a commission, carried. The Rev. Bill Marshall and Ruling Elder Bob Brown asked that their negative votes be recorded.

A supplemental agreement with the denominational Reformed University Ministries, for the work at North Carolina Stated University, was signed. A call was extended to Ben Inman to be the minister on the campus in Raleigh. His package, including benefits, totals \$60,212, with four weeks of vacation.

Presbytery entrusted to Evangelists John Musgrave and Kevin Thumpston for a period of twelve months the power to instruct potential ruling elders and deacons, and to receive and dismiss members.

Prayer was offered during the meeting for the Rev. Paul Zetterholm, who left the meeting early and who was subsequently admitted to the hospital after suffering a heart attack in a nearby emergency room. [He's now doing fine.—Ed.]

James River

The James River Presbytery convened for its Ninety-Eighth Session on April 8, 2000, at Calvary Reformed Presbyterian Church, Hampton, Virginia. The Moderator, the Rev. Paul Carter, read passages from Ephesians 2:11-22 and preached for the opening worship service. The Rev. Byron Snapp of the host church administered the sacrament of communion. Ruling Elder Dale White was elected as the new Moderator.

The Treasurer reported that the ending balance in the bank account as of March 20, 2000, was \$46,147.40.

Mr. Richard (Rusty) H. Mosley was examined and approved unanimously for ordination as Assistant Pastor of Calvary Presbyterian Church, Norfolk, Virginia.

Presbytery approved the affiliation agreement with the denominational Reformed University Ministries. The

budget for the work at the University of Virginia was increased from \$10,000 to \$28,000.

The Rev. Don Ward's call as Assistant Pastor at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Charlottesville, was dissolved, effective May 31, 2000. The call to him from the Temporary Session of Grace Community Chapel and the Mission of Presbytery Committee to be Organizing Pastor of the mission work was approved.

Mr. Greg Thomson was taken under care as a candidate and examined and approved for licensure. He has been called for pastoral office of campus minister at the University of Virginia. He stated that a literal interpretation of the days of Genesis 1 as 24-hour days is a reasonable inference from the text; however, he does not believe that it is a necessary inference.

The Presbytery accepted the quarterly intern report from Mr. Jerry Gill, and the licentiate report from Mr. John Ramirez. Per his request, Mr. Conrad Doskey was removed as a ministerial candidate.

The court approved an overture from Ruling Elder Dan Carrell regarding changes to BCO 32-19 (the use of counsel in an ecclesiastical trial).

Presbytery also adopted an overture to General Assembly from West End Presbyterian Church, Hopewell, Virginia, petitioning the Assembly to assume original jurisdiction with regard to the Rev. John Wood and the Session of Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church, Knoxville, Tennessee, and the practice of women preaching. The motion passed by one vote (13-12-6).

Presbytery authorized the purchase of a sound system for Presbytery, costing \$2,869.77.

Scholarships for several people to go on missions trips were approved. Presbytery voted to assist Mr. Keith Hoekman to travel to Jamaica, the Rev. Bret Carl to travel to Peru, and the Rev. Joe Mullin to travel to France.

The Rev. John Holmes was transferred to Pittsburgh Presbytery, where he has been called to be Pastor of South Hills Reformed Presbyterian Church in Upper St. Clair,

Overture Regarding Women Speaking in Worship Services and Seminars

Whereas: the issue of women speaking in worship services and seminars has been objected to by previous General Assemblies and appears to be an issue coming up again at this General Assembly and,

Whereas: Presbyteries have a duty to clearly teach on this issue so there is no confusion in the Churches,

Therefore: be it resolved by New Jersey Presbytery that based on I Timothy 2:12 the Presbytery will not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man in the Churches or ministries under our jurisdiction.

Overture Regarding Women in Combat

Whereas: General Assembly has been unable to clearly speak to the issue of women serving in the military and,

Whereas: as our women and Churches need clear guidance on this issue as the military proceeds to integrate its forces sexually,

Therefore: be it resolved that New Jersey Presbytery is formally on record as being opposed to the drafting of women into military service in time of war and peace, under any and all circumstances, for the reason that such governmental actions would be contrary to the word of God.

Let it further be resolved that: New Jersey Presbytery is formally on record as being opposed to the inclusion of women in military combat roles and that such inclusion is contrary to the Word of God..

New Jersey Presbytery further resolves that: our chaplains in military service shall not be required by any superior to advocate, support, or agree with any philosophy and effort to include women in military combat roles, nor can he be required by any superior to teach or educate such a philosophy and effort, nor shall he be forbidden to provide biblical counsel.

And finally: New Jersey Presbytery stands against billeting men and women in the same room in any circumstances.

[Note: the first part of this overture was adopted; the second part (starting with the words "Let it further be resolved . . .") was referred to a special committee.]

Pennsylvania. The Rev. Michael Shayne was transferred to North Georgia Presbytery as a minister without call.

Mississippi Valley

The stated meeting of the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley (PCA), was held at Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi, June 6, 2000.

TE Dean Rydbeck opened the meeting with prayer at 9 AM. The Stated Clerk established that there was a quorum present. RE Bob Bailey was elected Moderator and he again opened in prayer. The adoption of the docket was approved, visitors were introduced, and the welcome from the host was given by Guy Richardson.

Memorial Resolutions were adopted and read in honor of Lynn Sprecher, Ernest George, Jr., and Nicholas Smith who passed away. Rev. Dean Rydbeck led us in worship preaching from Hebrews 11:39-12:3.

TE Robert Duhs was approved as Stated Supply for First Presbyterian Church, Madison, effective June 26, 2000.

Internship reports were given by the following: John Anderson, James Furey, Dale Hollenbeck, and Richard Sutton.

The following men were approved as candidates: Chad Bailey at RTS Jackson.

The following men were approved as interns: Chad Bailey at Belhaven College RUM and Rohan Crown at Trinity Presbyterian Church.

The terms of call for the following men were approved along with the commission to install them: TE Tim Muse as pastor of the Brandon Church, Wylly Collins as assistant pastor of the Belzoni Church, Chris Shelton as pastor of the First Union Church, and TE Jud Davis as assistant pastor of the Alta Woods Church.

Mr. Chris Shelton was examined and approved for ordination after preaching a sermon on 1 Peter 1:13-16. Mr. Wylly Collins was examined and approved for ordination. TE Jud Davis was examined and approved as a transferring minister.

The Standing Rules Committee presented a proposal to change Presbytery Standing Rules, Article IIA (Stated Meetings of Presbytery), to increase the number of meetings from three to four. These four meetings would convene at 9:00 a.m. on the first Tuesday in February, May, August, and November. This was the first reading; the change will take place after the second reading.

After setting the arrangements for the next Presbytery meeting to be held at Twin Lakes Retreat Center on October 17, 2000, Guy Richardson closed the meeting with prayer.

—Guy Richard,
Correspondent

New Jersey

The Presbytery of New Jersey of the Presbyterian Church in America met for its 93rd (stated) meeting on Saturday May 20, 2000 at the Residence Inn, Somers Point, New Jersey. The Rev. Gary Englestad conducted opening worship and preached a sermon entitled, "Seeing With New Eyes," based on Lamentations 3:19-40 and Matthew 8:5-13. The service included singing, prayer and the reading of Scripture. The court was constituted with fourteen ministers and four ruling elders.

Presbytery accepted the report of the commission to install the Rev. Mr. M. Christopher Ehlers as Pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church, Cherry Hill, New Jersey, and dismissed the commission with thanks.

The funds in New Jersey's account in the Covenant Theological Seminary Scholarship for the School year 2000 - 2001 were approved for Neil Gamblin. After discussion and explanations, the motion carried.

The Treasurer reported that for the first four months of the year, \$7,292.22 had gone into the bank account, and that there had been expenditures of \$9,306.18.

The Rev. Eugene Potoka was nominated by the Executive Committee to serve as moderator beginning at the September meeting. Without objection, he was elected.

Two overtures, originally presented from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Mt. Laurel, New Jersey, at the February meeting of Presbytery, were discussed. These overtures concerned women teaching in worship services and seminars, and women in combat roles (see sidebar). Presbytery adopted the first overture as its own position. A motion was made "to send the overture to General Assembly, urging that it be adopted in similar form as the position of the PCA and to the other Presbyteries for their possible concurrence." After considerable debate, the court decided to refer this motion to a two-man committee (Dave Longacre and Dan Barr) to report at the next Presbytery meeting.

The second overture was amended by the Presbytery. The first part of the second overture was then adopted, while the second part was referred to a special committee (Gary Englestad, Chris Ehlers, Jack Dever and John Fuester).

During the discussion of the first overture, Chaplain Bob Marsh and the Rev. Jim O'Brien were seated as corresponding members with the privilege of the floor.

The Rev. Mr. O'Brien, presently serving the Locktown Church as stated supply, was examined and received by transfer from Eastern Carolina Presbytery.

A thirty minute time of prayer and sharing was conducted just prior to the lunch recess. Various men reported on the work of the Lord in their lives and ministries and others led in prayer for them.

Presbytery voted to adopt an overture for transmission to the General Assembly. This overture proposes changing the wording in the Directory for Worship so as to specify unleavened bread for communion, along with the statement: "If unleavened bread is unavailable, bread with leaven (yeast) may be used, but this is not to be the usual or normal practice of a congregation."

In reviewing the minutes of one Session, the Presbytery took note "that the minutes of 1997 and the first two months of 1998 were lost through electronic storage."

After extensive debate, the Rev. Bob Cameron was granted permission to labor out of bounds at the Mt. Carmel Church. Presbytery requested that he report on his ministry at the September meeting of Presbytery. [The Mt. Carmel Church left the denomination late last year. See the January-February 2000 issue of *P&R News*.—Ed.]

Presbytery approved the call of Harvest USA to David Longacre. Presbytery dissolved the pastoral relationship between him and the Village Church. The call to Harvest USA totals \$45,000, plus benefits and three weeks vacation.

The Rev. Dan Barr reported on the progress of the Shore Points Presbyterian Fellowship. Other reports presented included David Patterson on short term missions ministry, Will Hallman on his ministry out of bounds, and Mike Schuelke on the Chaplains and the Prayer responsibilities of the Missions Committee.

North Florida

The Presbytery of North Florida of the PCA was convened for its Eighth Stated Meeting on May 19, 2000 at Westminster Presbyterian Church, in Jacksonville, Florida, by the moderator, Rev. Steve Jennings.

The Rev. Randy Wilding opened the meeting with prayer and afterwards Mr. Jennings preached a sermon, entitled "Amazing Authority," drawn from Matt. 7:28-29. RE Richard Johns assisted in leading the worship.

The Presbytery was comprised of 15 TEs and 13 REs in attendance from 14 churches and mission works.

The first action undertaken was the election, by acclamation of TE John DuBose, a ruling elder from Christ Church, Jacksonville, who proceeded to moderate the remainder of the Court session.

After recognizing visitors and adoption of the court docket a Resolution Committee was appointed consisting of: TEs Jonathan Jones, Bill Lamkin, and David Burke.

A short seminar on church discipline was held for the edification of the presbyters, including case studies and discussion on how Biblical Presbyterian church discipline should occur.

After lunch and a resolution of thanks to Westminster Presbyterian for its hospitality in hosting the meeting, the minutes of the Seventh Stated Meeting of North Florida Presbytery were approved.

Presbytery accepted the report of the Commission to install Rev. Bill Lamkin as pastor of Redeemer PCA, Jacksonville, Florida, and dismissed the Commission with thanks. Presbytery also received Neal Ganzel as an intern, approved an internship plan for him, and assigned Rev. Steve Jennings to be his mentor from the Presbytery.

Upon the report of the Shepherding Committee, Presbytery went into executive session. When the Court emerged from executive session, it directed the moderator to appoint a committee to draft a formal motion of deposition against a teaching elder, to be presented at the next stated meeting (on July 15, 2000). It was agreed by consent that the charges would be the original charges relating to that minister's suspension from three years ago. The moderator appointed the following men to draft the deposition: TE Steve Jennings, RE Randy

Fairbanks, TE David Burke, and RE Bill Zvara.

The Shepherding Committee is acting as the Session for Amelia Island Presbyterian Church (AIPC) It was decided that the Shepherding Committee's report on AIPC be forwarded to the Presbytery's Administrative Committee to determine if it should be reported to the floor of presbytery or to the MNA Committee which retains oversight over the mission work. The presbytery also received a report from TE John McNicoll, pastor of AIPC, who shared upcoming events for the mission work. The committee's work was concluded in prayer by RE Bill Montgomery.

The MTW Committee report was opened with prayer by RE Richard Johns. The presbytery received various communications and the report was closed in prayer by Mr. Johns.

TE Chuck McArthur presented the report from the Administrative Committee where it was reported that, due to generous giving by the churches, there is a balance of \$6,647 in the Presbytery's General Fund. Additionally, proposed changes to the standing rules of presbytery were docketed for the first time reading at the next Stated Meeting. Presbytery also approved payment for a Director's and Officer's Liability Policy, with retroactive coverage back to November, 1999.

The MNA Committee report was presented by TE A. B. Scott. Presbytery received a report from TE Fred Guthrie, church planter at Grace Presbyterian Church (mission) at Palm Coast, Florida. TE Guthrie presented the results of a recent congregational survey, master planning, goal setting, and vision setting sessions.

Also approved were Affiliation Agreements between the Presbytery, its member churches, RUF at the University of Florida, and Reformed University Ministries. Finally, Mr. Scott concluded the MNA Committee Report with prayer after TE Randy Whited rose to comment on and answer questions in defense of the good name of some who he felt might have been disparaged during the previous stated meeting.

The Christian Education Committee report, presented by TE David Wayne, proposed a new brochure for the Church Communications ministry to be considered by the presbytery and its churches. TE Ky Keys reported on the recent youth pastor's retreat and Southland Camp registration deadline of June 17, 2000. TE Keys was also elected to succeed the present chairman

PCA Member Elected to County Commission in Savannah

Jeff Rayno, a member of Savannah's Christ Presbyterian Church, was elected to the Chatham County Commission by defeating an incumbent in the Republican primary. Because there is no

Democratic Party opponent, his triumph in the July 18th primary means that he is automatically elected to the seat.

According to the Rev. Brian Nicholson, Mr. Rayno's pastor, his campaign consisted of three planks: lower taxes, a war on crime, and taking care of drainage problems in the coastal county. The new magistrate had garnered a following among



conservative activists over the past couple of years, founding an organization called STOP (Stop Taxing Our People).

Besides political work, Mr. Rayno owns Fantasia Productions. Among that corporation's enterprises is a traveling display: a hands-on science exhibit which is rented to small libraries and museums throughout the Southeast.

Christ Presbyterian Church, where Mr. Rayno professed faith two years ago, is the former Eastern Heights Presbyterian Church. That congregation was one of two which withdrew from the Southern Presbyterian Church in 1966 and successfully fought all the way to the U. S. Supreme Court for their property.



Small, Southern OPC congregation is searching for a pastor. Strong preaching and a commitment to the pastorate are essential.

Interested parties apply to: Agape OPC, c/o John Orcutt, 324 Old Grove Road, Greenville, SC 29605.

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of the CE Committee, upon his resignation. Finally, the CE Committee informed the court that a TE membership slot would be vacated due to the expected transfer of TE David Wayne.

The Presbytery also heard, as a point of personal privilege, of concern expressed that unauthorized transmission of Presbytery Minutes have been made to those outside of Presbytery.

Finally, the Presbytery approved by acclamation the nomination of TE Jonathan Jones, pastor of Northshore Presbyterian, as Moderator-in-Nomination for the Ninth Stated Meeting, scheduled for July 15, 2000. Having concluded business, the court adjourned, with RE Randy Whited leading the closing prayer.

Reported by Robert Shapiro [Editor's note: We want to thank the PCA layman in Florida who provided us with the information on which this report is based.]

North Georgia

Duluth, Georgia (July 15, 2000)—The summer stated meeting of North Georgia Presbytery met in the new worship facilities at Old Peachtree Presbyterian Church. The Moderator, the Rev. Chuck Frost, presided over the meeting.

Mr. Matt Cadora, a licentiate, preached at the opening communion service from I John 1 on the incarnation. He was later examined and approved for ordination, to become Pastor of Community Groups at Intown Community Church, Atlanta.

Various changes in call were approved,

including the Rev. Jack Bell, who is leaving an associate pastorate at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Gainesville, Georgia, to a position with Mission to the World; and the Rev. Bruce McRae, who left his pastorate at Brookwood Presbyterian Church, Snellville, Georgia, to become Associate Director of Atlanta Seminary.

Several men were dismissed to other presbyteries: the Rev. Kellett Thomas to North Florida, the Rev. Jud Davis to Mississippi Valley, and the Rev. Brian Pierce to Tennessee Valley.

Presbytery took under care Mr. David Jones, who works as a Director of Christian Education at Smyrna (Ga.) Presbyterian Church. The court also took under care *in absentia* Mr. Rodney Davila.

Mr. Abe Radmanesh brought a message from Psalm 92. Presbytery received him as a candidate and intern pending release from Michigan Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

At this meeting, the Presbytery determined to streamline examinations of men coming through the Credentials Committee. From now on, the Credentials Committee will simply present the men to the floor, and not ask any questions of them, while allowing full opportunity for presbyters from the floor to question them.

An ad hoc committee appointed to investigate the fitness of a teaching elder for the ministry gave a report. The committee determined that the man was a faithful pastor, but that he had some weakness in administration and conflict resolution. The committee recommended that he not plant another church in North Georgia Presbytery, at least not for the time being.

Dr. Paul Fowler of the Atlanta Seminary reported that they anticipate 50 to 60 starting degree students in the fall.

The Presbytery MTW Committee moved approval of the Guidelines for the Committee, which had been distributed at the spring meeting. They were adopted.

The Presbytery voted to begin the process of amending the Standing Rules so that the court would have three rather than four stated meetings per year. The proposal, adopted on the first reading, is that the Presbytery's scheduled meetings would be in January, May, and September, alternating between the third Tuesday and third Saturday.

The Olympics Committee, which had worked to spread the gospel when the Olympic games were in the Atlanta area in 1996, was eliminated from the list of Presbytery's committees.

The Presbytery also determined that annual reports from those minister without call would be from now on be reviewed by the Shepherding rather than the Credentials Committee.

Presbytery approved and entered to record the reports of several commissions: to install David Gordon, to install Jeremy Jones, and to examine elders for the Sun Wong and Faith Korean Presbyterian Churches.

Internet Funnies

An elderly woman died last month. Having never married, she requested no male pallbearers. In her handwritten instructions for her memorial service, she wrote, "They wouldn't take me out while I was alive, I don't want them to take me out when I'm dead."

A police recruit was asked during the exam, "What would you do if you had to arrest your own mother?" He said, "Call for backup."

A very dirty little fellow came in from playing in the yard and asked his mother, "Who am I?" Ready to play the game she said, "I don't know! Who are you?" "WOW!" cried the child. "Mrs. Johnson was right! She said I was so dirty, my own mother wouldn't recognize me!"

"In Other Action," continued from page 13

*Declined to adopt an overture from Heartland Presbytery to declare full preterism a heresy. The court rather stated: "While grateful for the concern expressed in the overture, the 28th General Assembly finds our Constitutional Standards sufficient testimony to the PCA's understanding of the doctrines of Scripture with respect to the matter raised in the overture. . . ."

*Answered in the affirmative as amended an overture from Korean Southeastern Presbytery regarding refugees from North Korea. The Assembly amended the document to remove the nomenclature of "refugees", and instead resolved to pray "for those living in North Korea and for those fleeing that country asking that the way be made clear for the proclamation of the Gospel

QUOTES FROM THE QUORUMS

Heard on the floor of North Georgia Presbytery meeting, July 15, 2000:

"Based upon my experience in Atlanta, I have a clear sense that if there are 100 people in the room, there are at least 95 telephones here. So, please feel free to share them."—Moderator Chuck Frost, responding to the host pastor noting that there are no telephones in the church's new building.

"What do you think of when someone says, 'It's time for presbytery?'"—Moderator Chuck Frost. "Root canal."—Ted Lester. A few moments later: "Point of personal privilege. I just wanted to answer your question from before—what we think of when we think of presbytery. I think of lunch—what we're going to have. I just wanted to get that out."—Gef Ganey.

"Are you clear about that [motion]?"—Moderator Chuck Frost. "No!"—Recording Clerk Mark Rowden. "It's not important that you be clear about that—it's important that the court be clear about it."

A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six year olds. After explaining the commandment to honor thy father and thy mother," she asked, "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?" Without missing a beat one little boy answered, "Thou shall not kill."

A Sunday school teacher asked the children just before she dismissed them to go to church, "And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?" Annie replied, "Because people are sleeping."

A wise school teacher sends this note to all parents on the first day of school: "If you promise not to believe everything your child says happens at school, I'll promise not to believe everything he says happens at home."

and that they be enabled to 'lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.' (I Tim. 2:2b)."

*Approved an overture from Northeast Presbytery to dissolve that presbytery and form three new ones: Southern New England, Northern New England, and New York State. After the final meeting of Northeast Presbytery in September, the PCA will have a total of 60 presbyteries.

*Acquiesced in the referral of an overture from South Coast Presbytery to the Standing Judicial Commission. The overture alleged improprieties in the reception by Central Florida Presbytery of a minister who had renounced South Coast's jurisdiction as charges were in the process of being filed against him.

SUPPORTERS

ALABAMA

EBENEZER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2478 Hobbs Island Road/Huntsville
S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM
Bible Study, Wednesday, 7:00 PM
Fellowship Supper, 2nd Wednesday, 6:30 PM
(205)883-7298

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1400 Evangel Drive/Huntsville
S.S., 11:10 AM; Worship, 9:30 AM/6:00 PM
(205)830-5754

TALUCAH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2374 Talucah Road/Valhermoso Springs
S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 10:45 AM
(205)778-8288

ARIZONA
DESERT SPRINGS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1555 W. Overton Road/Tucson
S.S., 9:20 AM; Worship, 10:30 AM
(520)742-8990

CALIFORNIA

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH†
Meeting at Costa Mesa 7th Day Adventist Church, 271 Avocado St./Costa Mesa
S.S., 11:30 AM; Worship, 9:30 AM
(714)526-3153

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
940 East Valley Parkway, Suite G/Escondido
S.S., 11:00 AM; Worship, 9:00 AM/5:00 PM
(760)480-4373

NEW LIFE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
500 Manhattan Beach Blvd./
Manhattan Beach
S.S., 9:30 AM/Worship, 10:30 AM
(310)372-8455

CONNECTICUT

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF COVENTRY
55 Trowbridge Road/Coventry
S.S., 10:45 AM; Worship, 9:30 AM/6:30 PM
(860)742-7222

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF MANCHESTER
43 Spruce Street/Manchester
S.S., 9:15 AM; Worship, 10:30 AM
(860)643-0906

FLORIDA

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1875 N. Britt Road/Stuart
S.S., 9:30 AM;
Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM
(561) 692-1995

SHARON ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH †
17680 NW 78 Avenue/Hialeah
S.S. 11:20; Worship 10:00 AM/5:00 PM
(305)821-5761

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
3722 Belfort Road/Jacksonville
S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 10:45 AM/6:00 PM
(904)737-5133

GEORGIA

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
One Harker Road/Ft. Oglethorpe
S.S. 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM
(706)866-2521

SOUTH LIBERTY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Sharon Barnett Road/Sharon
S.S., 10:00 AM;
Worship, 11:00 AM (1st/5th Sun.)
(706)456-2377

CHEROKEE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
5549 Hwy. 92E/Woodstock
S.S., 9:35 AM; Worship, 8:00/10:45 AM
(770)928-2051

ILLINOIS
EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
624 N. Oakland Street/Carbondale
S.S., 11:15 AM; Worship, 9:30 AM
(618)529-1616

LOUISIANA
AUBURN AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

224 Auburn Avenue/Monroe
S.S., 9:15 AM
Worship, 10:30 AM/6:00 PM
(318)323-3061

BETHEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2040 East McNeese Street/Lake Charles
S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 8:15 AM/10:45 PM
(318)478-5672

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
146 E. Cherry Street/Opelousas
S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 10:45 AM
(318)948-9339

MARYLAND

CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Elkton High School
S.S., 11:15 AM; Worship, 9:15 AM
(410)398-3192

CHRIST REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Diplomat Building, 13992 Baltimore Avenue, Suite 300/Laurel S.S., 9:30AM; Worship 10:30AM/6:00PM (301) 498-3700

MINNESOTA

GOOD SHEPHERD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
15321 Wayzata Blvd./Minnetonka
S.S., 11:15 AM; Worship, 9:30 AM
Sunday Evening Bible Study, 6:00 PM
(952)835-6358

MISSISSIPPI

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
East Beach Blvd. at 24th Ave./Gulfport
S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM
Wed., Family Dinner (6:00)/Bible Study (6:30)
(228)863-2664

ST. PAUL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
5125 Robinson Road/Jackson
S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 10:55 AM/6:00 PM
(601)372-7497

COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
625 N. Church Ave./Louisville
Worship 11:00 AM and 6:00 PM
2nd Sunday, Fellowship Meal, 12:15 PM,
Evening Studies at 1:00 PM.
Wed Supper 6:00 PM; Prayer Mtg, 6:30 PM
(601)773-5282

PEARL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2933 Old Brandon Road/Pearl
S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM
(601)939-1064

TCHULA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
109 E. Main Street/Tchula
S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/5:00 PM
Wednesday Prayer Meeting, 7:30 PM
(601)924-7334

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1926 Grand Avenue at 20th/Yazoo City
S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/5:00 PM
Wednesday, 7:30 PM
(601)746-8852

NEW JERSEY

LOCKTOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
197 Locktown-Flemington Road/Flemington
S.S., 10:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM
(908)996-7707

MOUNT CARMEL CHURCH
350 Franklin Blvd./Somerset
S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM
(732)846-8777

NEW YORK

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Route 7/Duanesburg
S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 10:30 AM/7:30 PM
(518)895-2448

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
35 Station Road/Rock Tavern
S.S., 11:45 AM; Worship, 10:00 AM
(914)496-7971

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
209 Union Street/Schenectady
SS, 9:30AM; Worship, 8:15/11:00AM/6:00PM
(518)374-4546

AFFIRMATION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Routes 100 and 139/Somers S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM (914)232-0546

NORTH CAROLINA

DILLINGHAM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
16 Stoney Fork Road/Barnardsville
S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM
(828)626-3668

COUNTRYSIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
127 Ponderosa Road/Cameron
S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM
(919)499-2362

WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Highway 74/Cashiers
S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM
Wednesday, 7:00 PM Prayer Meeting
(828)743-2122

WHITE OAK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
699 Polly Watson Road/Fremont
S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM
(919)284-4196

HAZELWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
117 E. Main Street/Hazelwood
S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:15 PM
Wednesday, 7:00 PM
(828)456-3912

SHEARER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
684 Presbyterian Road/Mooresville
S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/5:00 PM
Wednesday, 7:00 PM
(704)892-8866

NEW COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
10301 Old Creedmoor Road/Raleigh
S.S., 11:00AM; Worship, 9:30AM/6:00PM
(919)844-0551

TRINITY REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
3701 South College Road/Wilmington
Worship 10:30 AM
(910)395-1252

NOVA SCOTIA

BEDFORD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
49 Nelson's Landing Blvd./Bedford
S.S., 11:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/7:00 PM
(902)864-1587

OHIO

FAITH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2540 S. Main Street/Akron
S.S., 9:30 AM
Worship, 10:45 AM/6:00 PM
Wednesday, 7:00 PM
(330)644-9654

CHRIST COVENANT REFORMED (PCA)
14787 Palmer Road SW/Reynoldsburg
Psalter Service, 9:30 AM/Worship, 10:45 AM
Thurs. Bible Study, 7 PM
(740)964-0889

OKLAHOMA

BEAL HEIGHTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
614 SW Park/Lawton
Worship, 10:45 AM and 6:00 PM
(580)355-4702

PENNSYLVANIA

NEW LIFE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP
2795 Patterson Drive/Aliquippa
S.S., 9:30AM; Worship, 11:00AM
(724)378-4389

LEHIGH VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
31 S. 13th Street/Allentown
S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM
(610)797-8320

COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
515 West County Line Road/Hatboro
S.S., 9:45 AM (Sum., 9:00); Worship, 11:00 AM (Sum., 10:00)
(215)675-9688

ROCKY SPRINGS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
123 Rocky Springs Road/Harrisville
S.S., 10:00 AM
Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM
(724)735-2743

SOUTH HILLS REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
110 Hays Road/Upper St. Clair/Pittsburgh
S.S., 9:15 AM; Worship, 10:30 AM;
Wednesday, 7:30 PM
(412)941-3480

HILLCREST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Route 19, three miles south of Leesburg/
Volant
S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship 10:55 AM/6:30 PM
(724)533-4315

SOUTH CAROLINA

REEDY RIVER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
46 Main Street/Conestee
S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00AM/6:30PM
(864)277-5455

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1955 Riverside Drive/Conway
S.S., 9:30 AM/Worship, 10:45 AM
(843)347-5550

FAITH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1800 Third Loop Road/Florence
S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship 11:00 AM/6:00 PM
(843)665-9235

BEECH STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1403 Beech Street/Gaffney
S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM
(864)489-2014

CALVARY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
9201 Old White Horse Road/Greenville
S.S. 10:00 AM; Worship 11:00 AM/6:00 PM
Wednesday Prayer Meeting 7:00 PM
(864)294-0895

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
105 River Street/Greenville
S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM
Wednesday, 5:45 PM
(864)232-7621

FELLOWSHIP PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1105 Old Spartanburg Road/Greer
S.S., 11:15 AM; Worship, 9:45 AM/6:00 PM
(864)877-3267

TENNESSEE

MIDWAY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
4011 Old Jonesborough Road/Jonesborough
S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship 11:00 AM/7:00 PM
(423)753-941

BRIDWELL HEIGHTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
108 Bridwell Heights Drive/Kingsport
S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM
(423)288-3664

FELLOWSHIP PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Highway 25/70/Newport
S.S., 9:30 AM/Worship, 11:00 AM/7:00 PM
Wednesday Prayer Meeting, 6:00 PM
(423)623-8652

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
900 Watauga Street/Kingsport
S.S., 10:00 AM
Worship, 11:00 AM/7:00 PM
(423)247-7341

TEXAS

COLLEYVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
715 Cheek Sparger Road/Colleyville
S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM
(817)498-2626

COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2701 N. 7th Street/Harlingen
S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM
Midweek service, 7:00 PM Wednesday
(956)425-3136

COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
SDA Church, 1209 S. John Redditt Rd./
Lufkin
S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 10:45 AM/5:30 PM
(409)637-6043

CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1620 E. Common Street/New Braunfels
S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 10:45 AM
(830)629-0405

PROVIDENCE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
3510 Austin Parkway/Sugar Land
S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM and 6:00 PM (except 1st Sun.)
(281)980-2522

VIRGINIA

COEBURN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
220 Second Street SW/Coeburn
S.S., 9:45AM; Worship, 11:00AM/6:30PM
Wednesday Prayer Meeting, 7:00PM
(540)395-2866

NEW HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Fairfax Fire Station #3 (Williams Memorial Hall),
4081 University Blvd./Fairfax
S.S., 11:15 AM
Worship, 9:30 AM/5:30 PM
(703)385-9056

CALVARY REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
403 Whealton Road/Hampton
S.S. 10:00am; Worship: 8:30 AM & 11:00 AM
Evening Gathering: 6:00 PM
(757)826-5942

WEST END PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1600 Atlantic Street/Hopewell
S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 10:50 AM/6:00 PM
Wednesday Prayer Meeting, 7:00 PM
(804)458-6765

KNOX REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Bennett's Chapel, 8520 Lee Davis Road/Mechanicsville Fellowship, 9:00 AM; S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 10:45 AM Sunday Evening, 6:00 PM (804)559-0264

IMMANUEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
4700 Colley Avenue/Norfolk
Worship, 10:30AM/6:30PM
Wed. Christian Education Classes, 7:00PM
Sat. Prayer Meeting, 7:00PM
(757)440-1100

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
108 Hill Street/Tazewell
S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00/7:00 PM
(540)988-9541

WASHINGTON

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2700 Andresen Road/Vancouver
Worship, 10:00 AM
Sunday Bible Study, 6:30 PM
(360)254-1726

WEST VIRGINIA

PROVIDENCE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
5865 Davis Creek Road/Barboursville
S.S. 11:30; Worship 10:00 AM/6:00 PM
(304)736-0487

PILGRIM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
601 Albert Street/Martinsburg
S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM
(304)263-5362

WISCONSIN

Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church†
136 West Union Avenue/Cedar Grove
S.S., 10:30 AM; Worship 9:00 AM/7:00 PM
(920)668-6463

REFORMATION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH†
Lake Country SDA Church, 142 Lake St./
Pewaukee
Bible Study, 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM
Wednesday Prayer Service, 7:00 PM
(414)781-2171

LAKESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Seventh Day Adventist Church, 21380 W.
Cleveland Ave./New Berlin
S.S., 10:45 AM; Worship, 9:30 AM
(262)968-6769

RON HAYNES

Disaster Response and Mercy Ministries
Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship
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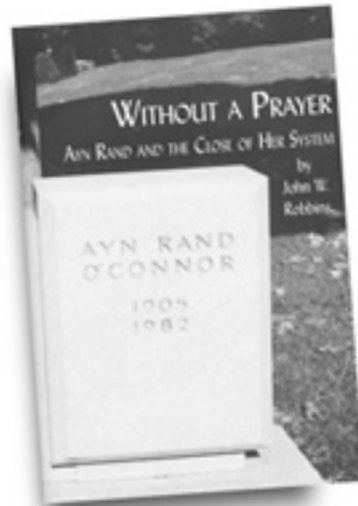
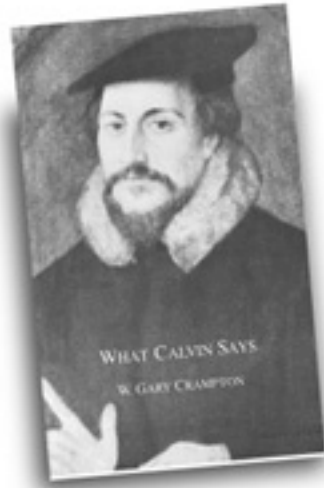
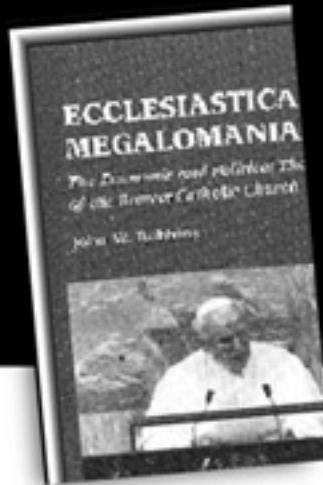
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The Rev. James Alexander
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